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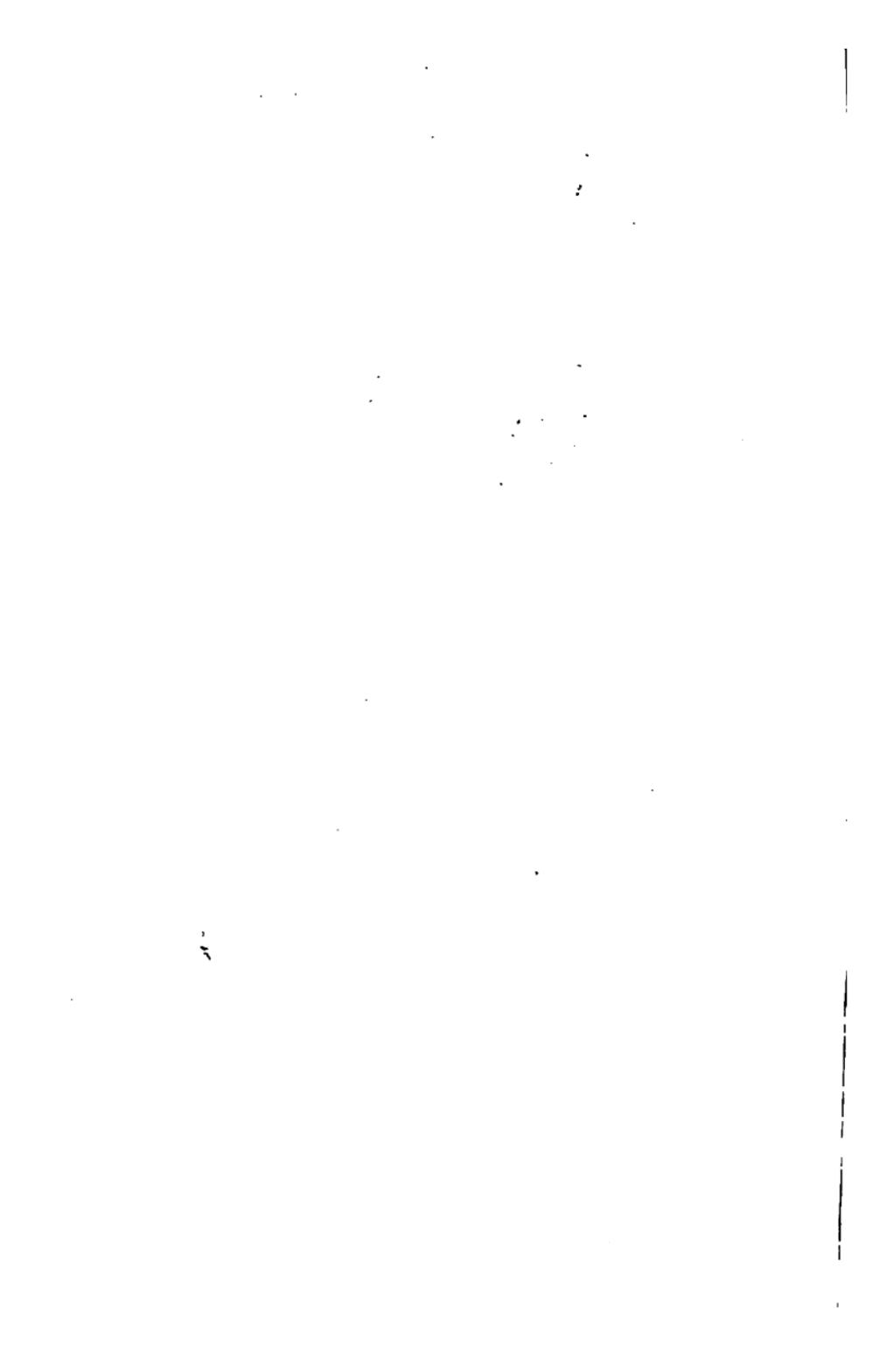
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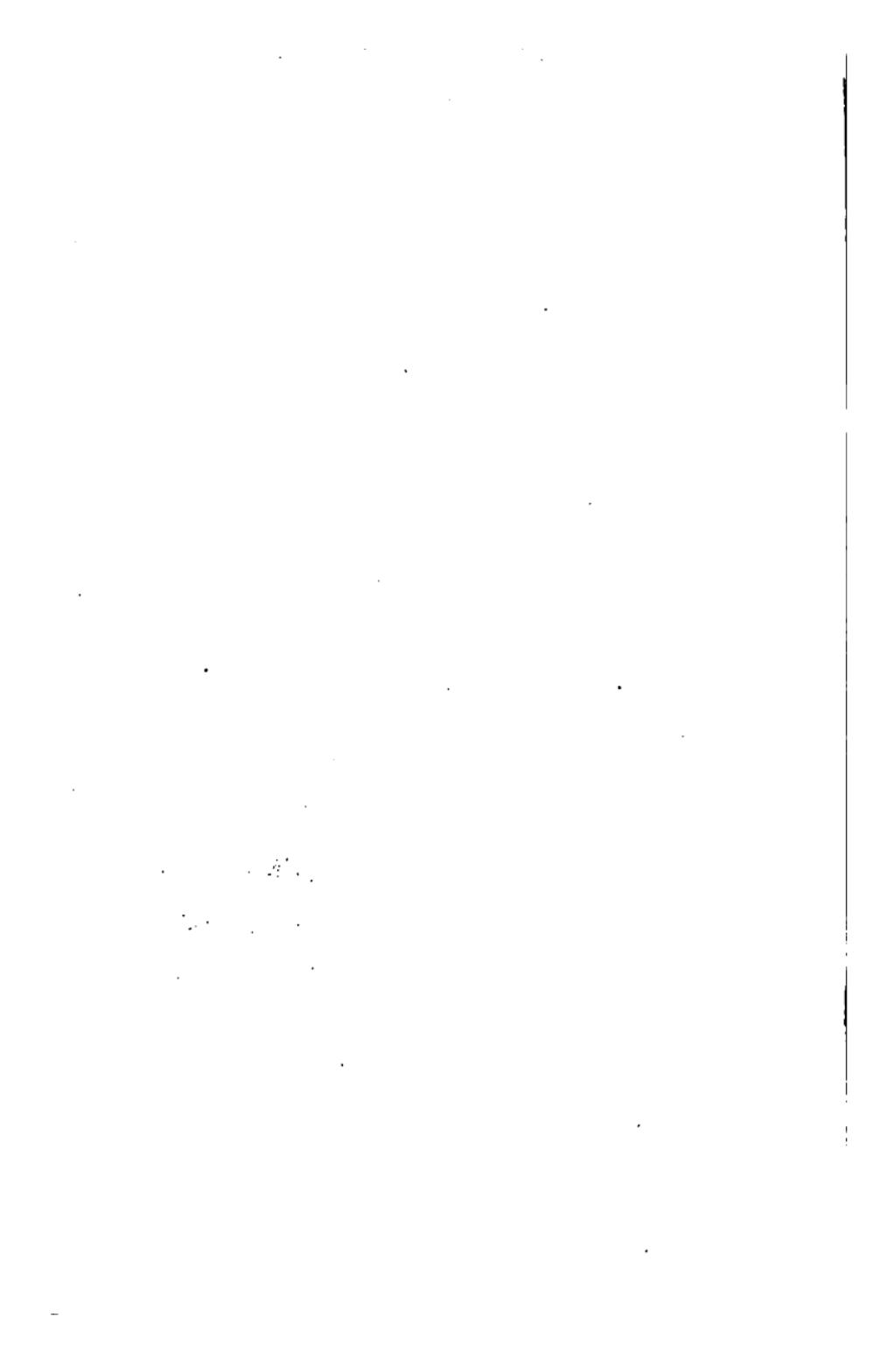


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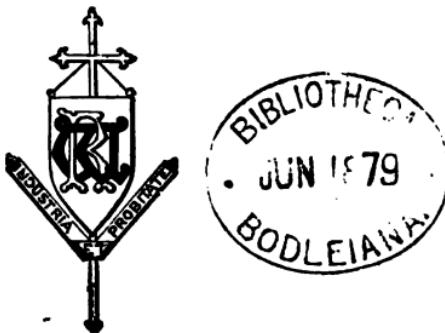
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FOURTH SERIES.

Saints of the Early Church.

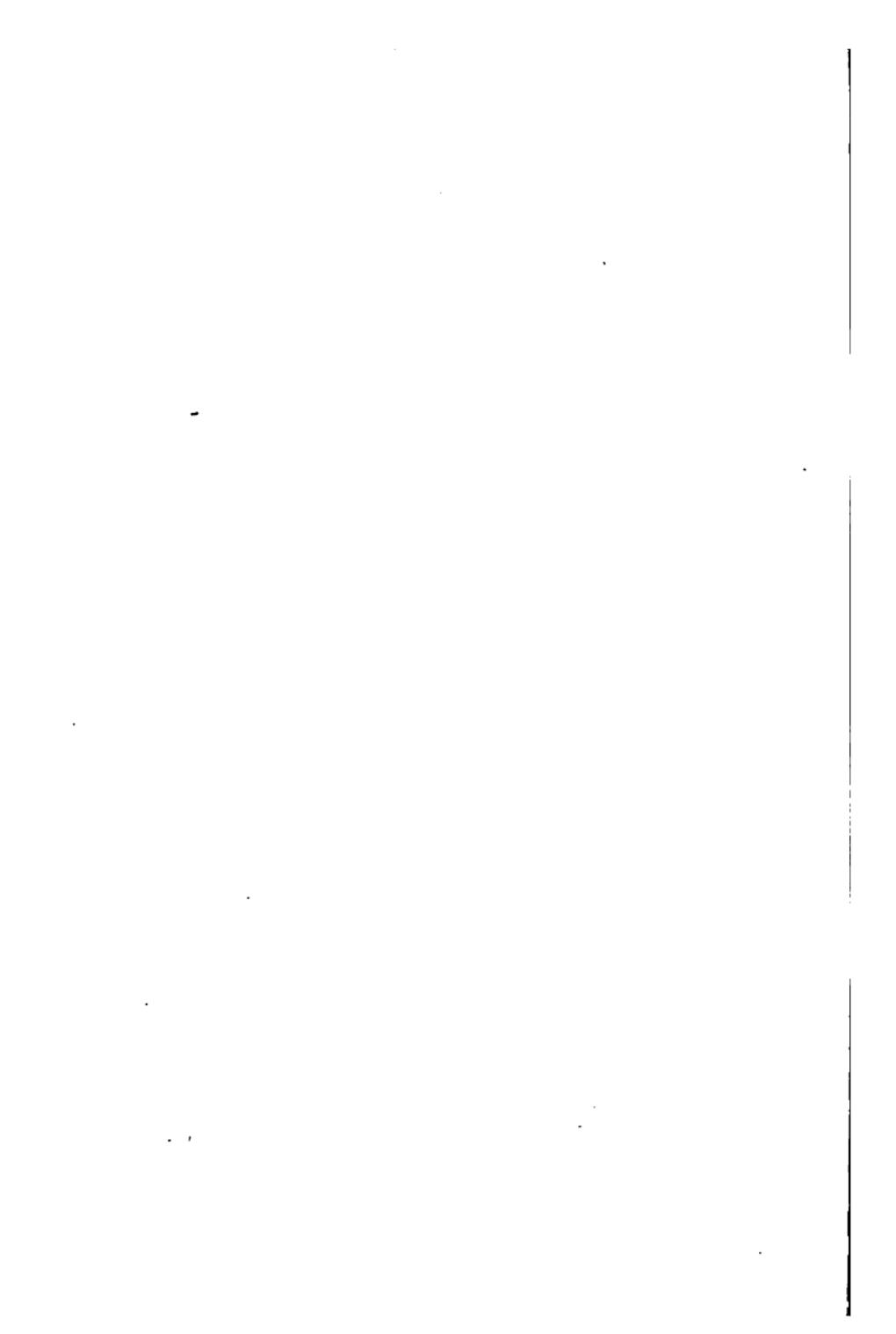
BY M. F. S.,

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"STORIES OF HOLY LIVES," "STORY OF THE LIFE OF ST. PAUL,"
"TOM'S CRUCIFIX, AND OTHER TALES," "FLUFFY," "THE
THREE WISHES," "MY GOLDEN DAYS," "CATHERINE
HAMILTON," ETC.



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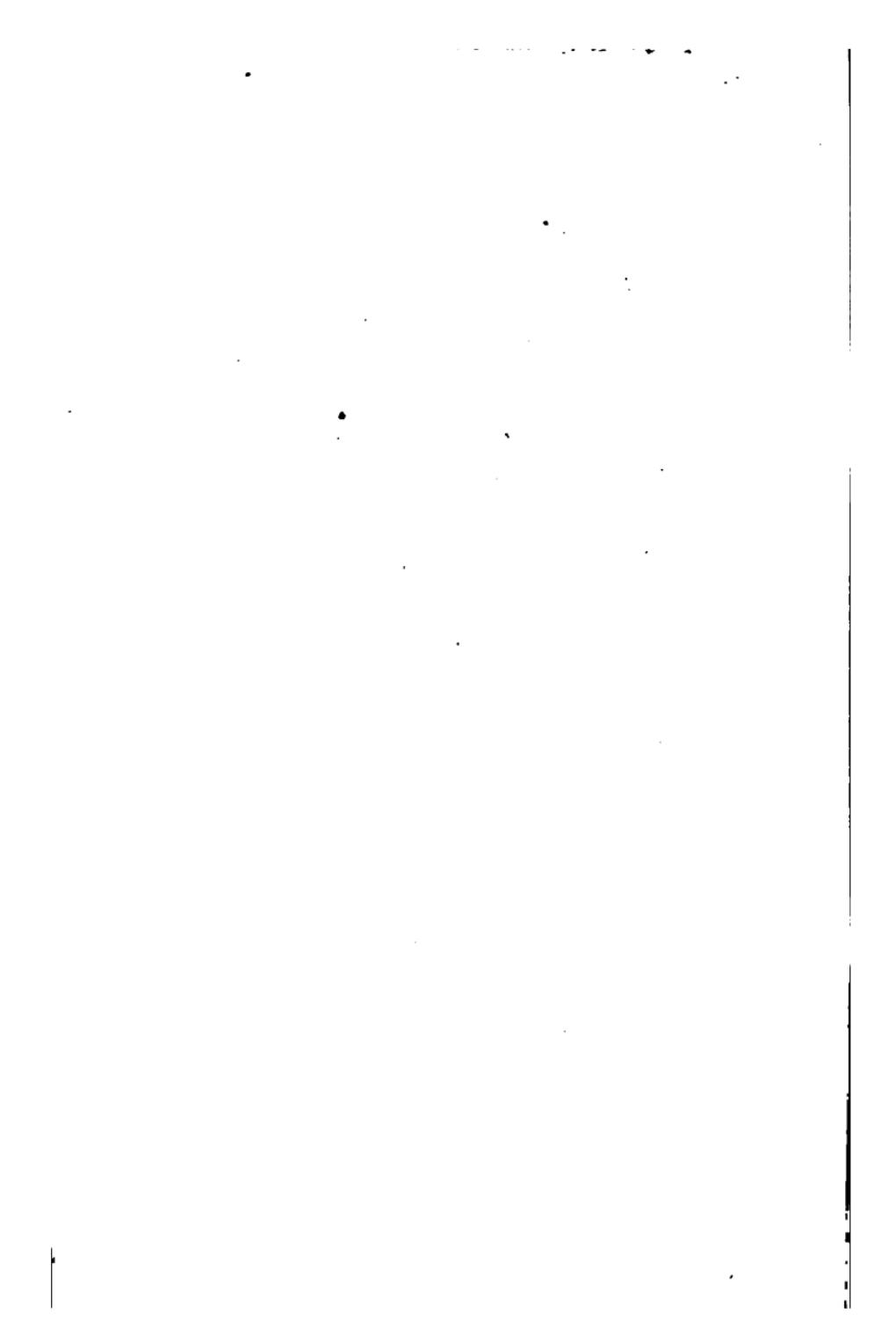


Dedicated

TO

MARY IMMACULATE,

QUEEN OF ALL SAINTS, AND HELP OF CHRISTIANS.





P R E F A C E.

HESE " Stories of the Saints " of the early Church are a continuation of a series written for the young. The Acts of the Martyrs of the first ages, told by more than one writer, are familiar to them, live in their imaginations, and excite many a generous impulse in their hearts.

The lives of those holy servants of God who followed immediately on the days of the persecution are not so well known ; but that they must be full of interest we cannot doubt when we remember what a struggle Christianity engaged in, first with the corrupt manners of the old Roman Empire, and next with the

untaught barbarians, who broke down the barriers of a rotten civilisation, and nearly swept back the human race into the darkness of utter ignorance.

In this little book we shall read of those who saved the world by their holy and ennobling influence, and who, in the midst of depraved courts, preserved the savour of Christian truth, which elevated the human race from its fallen state. Here also we shall read how God's grace, reigning in the hearts and quickening the pulses of His servants, was sufficient to conquer the unrestrained and savage nature, so that as generations of holy men and women succeeded each other the world began to cast itself with all its treasures, all its Church-taught arts, at the feet of Our Lord, and for a time in "The ages of Faith," Christendom lived as if God alone was King.

The stories of those Saints who shone in that bright period of the Church's history will be given in a succeeding volume.

Considerable use has been made of the "Lives of the Saints," by the Rev. S. Baring-Gould, whose learning and faithfulness in his first volumes cause us to regret more deeply the want of reverence which characterises those of later date.

May those who read the following pages be filled with such a reverent love for these friends of God, that, to be like them, will be the object of their desires, and the sum of their ambition!

E. L.

July, 1878.





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SS. Julian and Basilissa.

A.D. 310.

FROM earliest childhood the hearts of some of God's Saints have glowed with fervent love to Him; in them the love of the world and its pleasures has had no place, and the desire to live for the glory of their Creator has quenched every human hope or desire.

Thus was it with S. Julian of Antinoe, in Egypt, and when at eighteen years of age his parents desired him to marry he was greatly troubled, for he felt that the love of any creature must take something from the love he had to offer to his God.

1

Had not the great Apostle taught "He that is unmarried careth for the things that belong to the Lord, how he may please the Lord; but he that is married, careth for the things that are of the world, how he may please his wife?" and well might Julian pray and ponder before he consented; well might he entreat his parents not to require an answer from him until seven days had expired.

During that interval he gave his time to prayer; he fasted and performed works of penance, beseeching God to enlighten him and to show him how he might be preserved chaste and pure. At the end of the seven days Christ appeared to Julian in a vision saying, "Fear not to take to thee a wife, and thus fulfil the desire of thy parents. Live in purity with thy wife, for ye shall serve Me as virgins, and I shall not be separated from you, and as virgins shall ye enter into My Kingdom."

Upon hearing this plain indication of the Divine Will, the young man began to consider

what maiden he should choose; and, guided by God, his choice fell upon one named Basilissa.

They had been known to each other from childhood, and the parents were well pleased to receive her as Julian's wife, for she was sweet of disposition and as pious as fair. Basilissa was attached to Julian, but she was troubled that she should not be wholly given to God as she had desired.

In those times, marriage was celebrated with much boisterous merriment; but at last it was over, night had come, and guests had bidden the young bride and bridegroom farewell. Then Julian remembered the promise of Christ, and he began to pray, upon which a sweet fragrance filled the chamber as from mingled roses and lilies—roses, type of love, and lilies the sweet emblem of purity.

And love mingled with purity was in both those hearts as they revealed to each other their desire to live chastely and consecrated to God, though bound by the tie of marriage; and kneeling hand in hand, they vowed thus to

dwell together, and entreated God to keep them faithful to that vow which He had Himself inspired.

Looking up they saw with loving awe that they were not alone; Jesus and Mary were there, with an innumerable company of virgin saints; and the Divine Voice said, "Thou hast conquered, Julian;" and the sweet tones of the Virgin Mother addressed Basilissa, saying, "Blessed art thou who hast renounced the pleasures of this life for the glory that is eternal."

Then came two white-robed angels holding crowns in their hands, and pointing to a book, wherein Julian looking beheld his name and the name of his wife, and a voice said, "In that book are written the chaste and the sober, the truthful and merciful, the humble and gentle, those who for the love of Christ have given up father and mother, and wife, and children, and lands for His sake, lest they should impede the progress of their souls to perfection, and they who have not hesitated to

shed their blood for His Name, in the number of whom ye also have deserved to be written.” Then, as the vision disappeared, Julian and Basilissa gave thanks, and remained, praying until morning.

Upon the death of his parents, Julian made his dwelling into a hospital for the sick, and spent his fortune in relieving the poor and needy, and thus he has been called Julian the Hospitaller. He ruled over the portion assigned to the men while Basilissa governed the women’s department, aided by a sufficient number of devout virgins.

After many peaceful, holy years, Basilissa entered into her rest, leaving her husband to survive her. During the persecution of Diocletian he was seized and cruelly tortured, but the heart so wholly given to God was strong to suffer for Him. In chains he was dragged about the city, exposed to the gaze of the crowd; but a boy called out, “I see angels going with him—they hold over him a glorious crown. I believe in the God of Christians!” and he

fell at the feet of Julian and kissed them. The father of the boy heard of this, and was so angry that he ordered him to be cast with Julian into a dark and loathsome dungeon; but God filled this wretched pit with light from heaven, and it became fragrant with so sweet an odour that the soldiers were astonished and began to believe in God. That same night a priest, with seven children who were under his care, came to the prison, the door of which flew open by the touch of an angel who went before them, and entering he baptized the boy Celsus and the converted soldiers.

They were all sentenced to death by Marcian, governor of the city, and thus released from earth, joined the company of the blessed in heaven. In art SS. Julian and Basilissa are represented looking at their names written in the Book of Life, or holding the same lily in their pure hands. Their relics are preserved in the church of S. Basilissa at Paris.



S. Cyprian, Archbishop and Martyr.

A.D. 258.

ARTHAGE was the city of S. Cyprian's birth, and his family were pagans of high rank. His childhood and youth were passed in ignorance of the Christian Faith; and it was only when advanced in life that Cyprian was converted. Like many another in those early days when faith and love were strong, and the simple following of Christ was more practised than now, the first act of Cyprian's new life was the selling of all that he had that he might give to the poor. Taking the Gospel in its literal meaning, those Christians of the early Church were not afraid to trust

God; and as we read of their singleness of faith, their fervent charity, it would seem that in our day of greater civilisation we have lost much of the generosity of heart which distinguished bygone ages.

Before S. Cyprian had been long in the Church he was ordained priest, and later made Bishop of Carthage; and while holding that office his great desire was the conversion of men by prayer and by example. Then came the persecution of Christians under the Emperor Decius; and as the heathens of Carthage demanded that Cyprian should be thrown to the lions, he thought it well to retire for a time lest his work for God might be too soon interrupted. Heresies and divisions broke out at that time in the Church, and in condemnation of them Cyprian wrote a treatise upon the unity of the Church.

When he returned to Carthage a terrible pestilence was raging, and assembling the Christians, their good Bishop made them attend to the sick, whether heathens or not, who were

lying in the streets of the city utterly forsaken and neglected. “

Another persecution began under Valerian, and S. Cyprian was carried before the Pro-Consul to renounce his faith. “I am a Christian and a Bishop” he cried “I know no other gods than the One God Who hath made heaven, earth, seas, and all that they contain. He is the God to Whom we Christians pray day and night for ourselves and all men, even for the Emperor.”

The result of this confession was banishment to a town some fifty miles away from Carthage; but after the lapse of eleven months S. Cyprian was permitted to return to his own city. But there the persecution raged worse than before, and he was soon seized and carried to the house of the Governor. For one day he was remanded, and Christians watched in the streets and prayed earnestly for their holy Archbishop; but he felt cheerful in the belief that he should be condemned to death. After asking him the necessary questions to convict him of teaching and professing the Faith of Christ, the Governor

pronounced sentence on him. "Because thou hast lived in sacrilege, and hast assembled in conspiracy so many persons, and hast been openly the enemy of the Roman gods, thou shalt be a warning to those whom thou hast associated with thee in sin, and the law shall be avenged by thy blood. Thacius Cyprian, thou shalt be punished with the sword."

"*Deo gratias,*" was the calm reply, while a smile spread over the countenance of the holy servant of God, a smile of content that he should thus be permitted to die for Christ Who had died for him.

Being led outside the city, he spent some time in prayer, then giving money to the executioner as a thankoffering for the service he was about to render him, Cyprian bound his own eyes, the sword fell, and, having followed Christ in suffering, he passed to the company of the blessed and the marriage supper of the Lamb.



S. Ambrose, Bishop.

A.D. 397.

“  HAVE not lived among you so that I am ashamed to live, nor do I fear to die, for we have a good Master.” Such were the words of the great S. Ambrose, when—in their fear to lose him—his friends besought him to ask recovery from God; but it was the Will of the Almighty that his work should end with that illness, and so, after much patient suffering, he passed from those on earth who had loved him so well.

The father of S. Ambrose held the office of Prætorian Prefect of Gaul at the time of the

child's birth. While lying asleep in his cradle, those who watched over the infant saw a swarm of bees alight upon his mouth, without in any way injuring him, and this was considered a sign that he would grow up possessed of rare eloquence.

Of the earliest years of S. Ambrose we know little; but in 373 we find him appointed governor over certain provinces in the north of Italy. The Praetorian Prefect of Italy was a Christian, and as Ambrose departed, said to him, "Go and govern as a bishop—not as a judge."

The Saint had a sister named Marcellina, who had already given herself to the religious life, but he had not as yet been baptized.

In the year 374 there was great disputing as to who should be made successor to the Bishop of Milan, who was just dead, and Ambrose, in his character of governor, had to enter the church to command order among those assembled. While he spoke to the excited people, some child's voice cried out, "Ambrose is Bishop," repeating the words

again, and a third time. The multitude instantly caught at the idea thus presented, and echoed the cry; but Ambrose, declaring he was but a catechumen and a layman, escaped from them and out of the city. They brought him back, and again he fled, for he felt wholly unfit for such an office; but on being again forcibly taken to the church, he yielded to what he felt must be the mysterious Will of God. Being baptized, the Saint begged a short delay ere his consecration as Bishop, but it was not granted him, and on the eighth day from his baptism he was raised to the dignity of that office.

His first act was to give up all his personal property to the poor, and his lands to the Church, and then he began a most austere life, spending his nights in almost uninterrupted prayer, and fasting daily. Though severe with himself S. Ambrose was hospitable to others, and loved to receive the poorest at his table, but he was never seen at the entertainments of others.

Italy was just then under the government of the Empress Justina, as her son Valerian was but a child. Justina was an Arian, and desiring the use of one of the churches in Milan, she summoned S. Ambrose to her presence, and commanded him to give up the church of S. Victor, just outside the city walls. The Bishop answered that it was not in his power to give up what belonged to God, which made the Empress exceedingly angry, and still firmly resolved to have her will.

On Palm Sunday a message was brought to Ambrose that S. Victor had been seized in the name of the Emperor, but the Bishop was in nowise disturbed, and began to offer up the Holy Sacrifice. Before he had proceeded far, there came the news that an Arian priest had been seized by the people, and he afterwards said that as he made oblations he prayed that no blood might be shed, or if so, that it might be his own.

Again a summons came from the Empress,

and S. Ambrose told her that if she asked for goods or money which were his own he would make no demur, but that the church belonged to God, and no Emperor had right to possess himself of what was sacred.

On the Wednesday in Holy Week, the Bishop was at the church of S. Victor, when the soldiers were sent to seize the new church within the city walls, after which they came and made part of the congregation to whom Ambrose was preaching. When he concluded, a message was given him from Justina, asking if he purposed trying to rule over his sovereign. He answered, "Priests have by old right bestowed sovereignty, but never have they assumed it. We have a dominion of our own; the dominion of the priest lies in his helplessness, as it is said, 'When I am weak, then am I strong.' "

For a time the Empress left him alone, but not for long, and she then declared that he and his Christian people must leave the city unless he chose to give up the church of

S. Victor. Ambrose replied that he should remain in Milan until he was forcibly removed or put to death. The soldiers were then ordered to surround the church, but being themselves Christians, and fearing excommunication, they suffered the people to enter, and Ambrose instructed them in those chants which had long been used in the Eastern Church, so that they were kept quiet and peaceable, and in the end were permitted to depart quietly.

After the death of his mother, the young Emperor embraced the Christian faith, sending for the holy Bishop Ambrose to baptize him; but not long after he was murdered and Theodosius became his successor.

Though a Christian, the new Emperor was of a very passionate temper, and we have one instance of his yielding to it most terribly. The people of Thessalonica had been riotous, but at the intercession of S. Ambrose, Theodosius pardoned them. However, he was persuaded to retract that promise, and in a

fit of fury he had seven thousand persons put to death.

Hearing of this massacre, S. Ambrose was deeply grieved, and sent a letter to the Emperor hoping to move him to repentance. In it he reminded him of King David, who in shame and deep contrition cried, "I have sinned against the Lord;" and then he went on to say, "I have written this to persuade you by a royal example to humble yourself to God. You are a man, temptation has come upon you, get the better of it. Tears and penitence are the only remedy for sin. Neither angel nor archangel can wash it away, only the Lord Himself, and even He pardons not except upon penitence."

It is not known how the Emperor received this letter, but when Ambrose was one day offering the Holy Sacrifice, he presented himself at the church, whereupon the Bishop, turning to him, hesitated not to say he was unfit to enter there until he had done public penance for his sin. Then the heart of Theo-

dosius melted, and prostrating himself in the sight of all the people, he cried, "My soul cleaveth to the dust; O quicken me according to Thy word;" and being absolved, he ceased not to mourn until the day of his death.

Though thus bold to rebuke evil, none could be more tender and merciful than S. Ambrose, and we are told that when any one confessed grievous sins to him, he wept as if he had himself been guilty.

Such grief because God was offended frequently moved the hearts of those who were most obdurate, and brought them to a spirit of true contrition.

Great was the power over men which had been given to Ambrose; great also was the work he was enabled to do for God. Eloquence and learning were his, and yet at heart he was simple and humble as a child, and lay down to die only trusting in the goodness and mercy of his Saviour. Just at the last, he remained motionless for several hours with

his hands stretched out in the form of a Cross and his lips moving in silent prayer; and so on the morning of Easter Eve he went to his crown of reward, being then in the fifty-eighth year of his age.



S. Hilary, Bishop.

A.D. 368.

HE family of S. Hilary was one of the most illustrious of their time, and dwelt at Poictiers. Though brought up as a pagan he was converted in early life to the Christian faith; and it seemed as if from that time God drew him near to Himself, for his life became so spiritual and so holy that people were wont to say of him that he was more like a priest than a layman.

Beyond this we know little of the youthful life of S. Hilary, for though destined to take so important a place in the Church it seems to have been God's purpose to train him silently

and obscurely for that work of his later years.

About the year 350 Hilary was consecrated to the See of Poictiers, and it is very probable that he was still a layman, for in those days laymen were sometimes raised at once to the episcopal rank. The great S. Martin of Tours was in his youth one of S. Hilary's pupils while he was at Poictiers ; but not only did he employ himself in teaching those who should afterwards become great supporters of the Church, for he wrote many valuable works in spite of laborious occupations, and especially set himself to refute the Arian heresy which was then gaining ground.

These Arians were a sect denying the divinity of Christ, and when at a council held by them in Languedoc, S. Hilary spoke nobly and courageously in support of the Christian faith, the Emperor Constantius banished him to Phrygia, where he remained many years. During that exile we hear a story of him which demonstrates his love of God and the desire he

had to lead others to rest wholly in His love. Before being consecrated to the service of the Almighty, S. Hilary had been married and had an only daughter named Apra. While in Phrygia she wrote to him, saying that she was sought in marriage by one who was both rich and noble, but her holy father grieved rather than rejoiced to hear it, and wrote entreating Apra to think what reward Christ promised to those who renounced earthly affection for His sake. So forcibly did he write, and with such earnestness did he dwell upon the unspeakable bliss of those who follow the Lamb whithersoever He goeth, that Apra rejected her suitor and determined to love Christ only. On his return home S. Hilary prayed God to take her to Himself; and his request was granted, for Apra died without any visible cause and without pain.

One Sunday while travelling, the Saint rested at a little village, and went to the church which was there. A peasant girl, named Florentia, saw him, and calling out that he was one of

God's saints, fell at his feet and entreated him to make the sign of the Cross over her, and then her father and the rest of her family received Holy Baptism from the hands of Hilary.

At length the Arians became so fearful of his influence that they entreated Constantius to send him back to Gaul ; and thus S. Hilary returned to his bishopric, where he remained till his death in the year 368. It is told that when his soul had passed away a bright light filled the room where the body lay, and every one knew it was a light from the glory of heaven which told that the remains of one of God's holiest servants were there.



S. Ephraem the Syrian.

A.D. 378.

EHE parents of this Saint were only poor people of Nisidis, who, like other Christians in those days, had suffered much during the persecution under Diocletian. Ephraem as a boy was not free from many of the faults common to youth, and in after life he used to speak of these sins, and grieve much for them as the cause of offending God. One time we hear that as he idled about in a roadway leading to a wood, he saw a cow grazing which he knew to belong to a very poor man who was a neighbour; but from a love of mischief he began

pelting the animal, driving it about so roughly that it fell down dead in the road, and there Ephraem left it, resolving to keep secret what he had been doing. As he made his way towards home, he met the owner of the animal, who, stopping him, said, "Have you been driving away my cow?" Ephraem felt both afraid and ashamed to confess what he had done, and therefore he denied all knowledge of the cow, and even abused the poor man for suspecting him of meddling with it. Some few days after, Ephraem was sent on an errand by his parents, and idling again, he fell into the company of some shepherds and strayed with them into the wood, where he remained all night. That same night some of their sheep were stolen, and thinking this boy must be in some way concerned in the robbery, the shepherds dragged him before a magistrate, who would not believe him when he declared his innocence, but had him cast into prison.

Ephraem felt very indignant at treatment

which was so unjust, for he knew nothing of the robbery; but at last he fell asleep in the gloomy prison and dreamed that an angel appeared, asking him why he was there. He began to declare himself guiltless, but the angel checked him by speaking of what he had done to the poor man's cow, and how he had denied his offence, and thus Ephraem saw that he deserved all the suffering which had come upon him. His punishment was severe, for his confinement in prison lasted forty days, at the end of which he was brought up before the magistrate in the company of two criminals who had committed serious offences.

When he saw these men stripped and placed upon the rack, Ephraem fell into a state of extreme alarm, and cried bitterly; however, nothing was then done to him, and he was remanded to prison for forty days longer.

When the time came for his second trial, Ephraem made a solemn vow that he would become a monk if God would but spare him

the suffering of the rack, the expectation of which caused him such terror. Just as he was about to be placed thereon, a servant came to tell the magistrate that his dinner was served; and thus, through what seemed a mere accident, but was God's over-ruling providence, Ephraem again escaped the punishment he dreaded, and though taken back to prison was very soon dismissed altogether.

Feeling now bound by his vow, he ran at once to a mountainous place where an aged hermit was dwelling, whom Ephraem entreated to receive him as a monk.

At the age of eighteen years Ephraem was baptized, and then he became enlightened to know how sinful had been his childhood and earliest youth, and he began at once to do penance for the past, lying on the ground and otherwise afflicting himself.

By nature this Saint was extremely passionate, but God's grace so completely subdued his violence that he became known by the name of "the peaceable one."

It is told of S. Ephraem that once, after a fast of seven days, one of the brothers was bringing him some pottage, and in carrying it let fall the dish, so that its contents were spilled on the ground. The Saint was in nowise disturbed by the accident, but calmly said, "Never mind; if the supper will not come to me, I must go to the supper:" and then he sat down on the ground, and gathering up what he could ate it with great content.

Although Ephraem had not received much education he became proficient in the learning of the Syrians, and could write with much eloquence and power, so that many of his productions were translated into Greek during his lifetime and after his death.

He was ordained deacon at Edessa, and it is generally believed that before being advanced to the priesthood he died, though some few writers have affirmed that he received ordination to that office from S. Basil.

When the town of Edessa was visited with

the horrors of famine, Ephraem quitted his lonely cell and entered the city, rebuking the rich because they selfishly refused to help the poor, who were dying from want, and telling them that their hoarded wealth would bring a curse upon their own heads. "We know no one who will distribute our goods with justice," said the rich citizens by way of excuse, whereupon Ephraem proposed they should confide in him, and they were ashamed to refuse. Having received their money, S. Ephraem fitted up three hundred beds in the public galleries, and there attended to all those who were in the greatest misery, labouring with unwearyed devotion until the scarcity of food ceased. Then, feeling his work done, Ephraem returned to the cell he had left in the cause of charity and died a few days afterwards in great peace.

An account of this Saint's life is given in the life of S. Basil, and an oration upon his many virtues was composed by S. Gregory Nyssen. He was specially distinguished by

an ardent love to Mary, the Mother of God ; many of his beautiful thoughts and words concerning her have been preserved to our own day.



S. Basil the Great.

A.D. 379.

BASIL was one of a large family of children whose parents were distinguished by great sanctity, and who were thus, early trained to the love and service of God. The eldest of the boys was Basil, and his infancy was passed under the care of a grandmother whose holiness of life made a deep impression upon the child. At ten years of age he was sent for education to Cæsarea, the city of his birth, and soon made rapid progress so that he outstripped his fellow-students, and yet his piety and devotion were in nowise lessened by his application. When he had

learnt all that the schools of Cæsarea and Constantinople could teach him, S. Bazil went to Athens, and with Gregory of Nazianzen pursued a course of study there. This friendship was one of these rare instances of friendships contracted *in* and *for* God; no envy nor jealousy inspired it; no other interest filled either heart than the desire to be growing in grace; and thus they excited each other to the practice of prayer, to the continual contest against temptations, to vigilance over self, and purity of intention, so that in all things their aim should be the divine glory.

S. Basil was the first to leave Athens and open a public school of oratory at Cæsarea, but he afterwards renounced the world and embraced the monastic life, having first visited the hermits of the desert and the chief religious houses of Syria and Egypt, and then retiring to Poictiers, where he established a monastery over which he ruled for five years. He founded other houses both for men and women, and it was for their use that he drew up certain

rules, and works upon the religious state and its duties.

The life of S. Basil was one of great personal austerity. For whole nights he would lie on the ground, wearing a rough hair-shirt; his only meal in the day was of bread and water, or a few herbs as an addition upon some special festival, and he never would possess more than one tunic and one coat. Yet the Saint was not austere in manner, but of unusual sweetness and kindness in his dealings with others, and of wonderful patience. His time was given to prayer and the study of Scripture, and the tilling and cultivating of the land belonging to the monastery. But God's purpose was to withdraw His servant from this solitude and place him in circumstances where he might influence others to the practice of those virtues he had acquired in prayer and retirement, and Basil was made Archbishop of the metropolitical church in the year 370. He now began to preach with great earnestness, and multitudes thronged to

hear him ; and he established many devout practices, such as the assembling together to public prayer and others. During a time of great drought this holy Bishop prostrated himself in prayer before God, and thus the calamity was removed.

Many were his charities, but one of the greatest was the institution of a hospital for the poor and sick, and he spent much time there comforting those who suffered, and giving them religious instruction.

The Emperor Valens arrived in Cappadocia full of enmity to the great Archbishop, whom he summoned before him that he might command him to communicate with the Arians. With calm and cheerful countenance the Saint appeared before the prefect Modestus, who arrived sooner than Valens ; and who said, “ Basil, what dost thou mean by opposing so great an Emperor whom we all obey ? Art thou under no apprehension of feeling the effects of the power we are armed with ? ”

“ To what does this power extend,” said the Saint, whereupon Modestus told him it ex-

tended to the confiscation of property, to banishment, torture and death.

"Then," said Basil, "he who has nothing to lose is secure against confiscation. I am master of nothing but a few books and the rags which I wear. As to banishment, I know of no such thing in your hands to inflict on me, for I do not account this country as my own. As little do I dread your torments, for my emaciated body would not long hold out against them; much less do I dread death, for it will sooner bring me to the Creator for Whom alone I live."

The prefect could not but admire such courage, and gave Basil till the morrow to deliberate, and then going to the Emperor Valens told him what had passed. Valens then summoned the Saint into his own presence, but finding him dauntless at length let him go, and even on the Feast of the Epiphany went to the church and made the customary offering at the offertory, which the Bishop accepted.

But only the day after, the Emperor, to satisfy the Arian Bishops, gave the order for Basil's banishment, an order which failed of execution through the over-ruling providence of God, Who caused the little son of Valens to be seized with violent fever that very night. His mother declared that it was a punishment for the decree of banishment against the Bishop, and in his fear Valens sent for Basil, who was just making ready for his journey. The Saint begged the Emperor and Empress to permit the child to be instructed in the Catholic Faith should his life be spared, which indeed he promised in God's Name on condition of their consent; and in their distress they yielded, and at the prayer of Basil the child was made suddenly well. For a time then the heart of Valens was softened, but only for a time; he was not long before he declared again that the Bishop should go, and taking up one of the reeds used for writing in those early days he was about to sign the order, when the reed broke in his hand; a second and again a

third time it was the same, and as he seized the fourth reed he saw his hand trembling and felt his arm give way, so in a fright he determined to persecute Basil no more.

In the same year that peace was restored to the Church by the Emperor Gratian, S. Basil fell sick, to the great alarm of the people of the city when they heard that it was a sickness unto death.

Upon the 1st January, 379, he passed into eternity, saying with his last breath, "Lord, into Thy hands I commend my spirit." The Saint had so completely given up all wealth that he did not leave sufficient money for the erection of a tomb-stone, but the love and reverence of the people caused them to bury him with great magnificence, while pagans and Jews joined with the Christians in mourning the death of one who had been like a good and tender father to all men.



S. Gregory Nazianzen.

A.D. 389.

GHIS great doctor of the Church was born in a small village in the territory of Nazianzen not far from Cæsarea, and his mother was a woman of such holiness that she has been placed among those whom we reverence as Saints. The father of Gregory had been brought up to the worship of false gods, but the prayers of his wife Nonna obtained his conversion, and he was at no long interval appointed to the episcopal see of Nazianzen, which he held until his death. When the little Gregory was born, his mother offered him to the special service of the Almighty, and from the earliest dawn of reason he was trained

in the paths of piety and virtue. Having studied at the schools in his own country he was sent to Cæsarea, and thence to Alexandria for his further advancement in learning, and at length embarked for Athens. But the vessel which was to convey him there met with contrary weather and beat about for some twenty days, during which the passengers had no hope of life ; and Gregory was filled with distress because he had not been baptized, and with tears implored God to preserve his life, which he again promised to His service. That prayer was heard, the storm ceased, and the vessel went on its voyage in safety. At Athens, S. Gregory formed a friendship with the great S. Basil, and together they studied and together also strove to avoid evil influences and companionship. It is said that they were only familiar with two of the streets of the city— one which led to church, the other which took them to the schools ; and they were devoted to holy practices of prayer and fasting and charitable alms to the poor.

When Gregory left Athens many advised him to teach rhetoric, or choose some profession in which he might best display his talents and learning ; but he always answered that he only aspired to serve God wholly, and to that service he must devote his life, talents, and all that he possessed.

Returning to Nazianzen he at once received baptism at the hands of his father, and from that day became as one in whom all ambition, all worldliness, was dead. For food he would take only coarse bread, while he drank but water, and his clothing was of the poorest and meanest description.

Several painful illnesses attacked him, but S. Gregory found in all suffering occasion for joy, and a means of overcoming nature. As a youth he had been wont to give way to immoderate laughter, now he bewailed that levity with many tears so that often he could not sleep because of his bitter weeping.

He had also been naturally passionate, but by God's grace so completely conquered him-

self that he became unaffected by any annoyance which could befall him. But a great desire to be more wholly withdrawn from men filled the soul of Gregory of Nazianzen, and in the year 358 he joined S. Basil in his solitary retreat near the river Iris, where they gave themselves to prayer, fasting, and manual labour. But when the father of this Saint was above eighty years of age, he summoned him to assist in his duties, and Gregory was ordained priest on the Christmas Day of the year 361 ; but as in this he had been taken by surprise, he fled back to his solitude in Pontus. There, however he became convinced that he was—as the prophet Jonas—disobeying the command of the Almighty, so he went again to Nazianzen and preached his first sermon on Easter Day.

During the lifetime of Gregory, the church of Constantinople was persecuted greatly by the Arians, so that the few Catholics had no priest and no power to assemble together. To the Saint they applied in their distress,

and though he was then advanced in years he hastened to Constantinople, where the Arians heaped every insult upon him. At first he lodged in a house, and there the Catholics gathered to listen to him; but he soon converted it into a church which he named the Church of the Resurrection. It is related that a woman fell from a gallery within this building and was quite dead, but at the prayer of Gregory and the assembled congregation, life was miraculously restored to her. So the little flock of Christians increased, and the Arians were so angry that they would pelt S. Gregory with stones as he passed through the streets, and at length dragged him before a magistrate on the charge of creating disorder. After many troubles, they were happily ended by the arrival of Theodosius the Great, who drove the Arians out of all the churches in the city, and put S. Gregory in the church of S. Sophia. The people demanded that he should be their bishop but the holy man besought them to

turn their minds from that subject and think only of the goodness of God in permitting them the free exercise of their religious faith.

But very soon S. Gregory was appointed to the See of Constantinople, although afterwards a certain party in the Church opposed his election. Then the Saint said to them, "This dignity I never desired, I took this charge much against my own will, and if you think fit, I am most ready to depart." The Bishops accepted that resignation, and the Saint took farewell of the city and returned to Nazianzen, in which retirement he wrote a poem upon his own life.

In 382, Gregory found Eulatius to take his place there as bishop, and went to end his days near Arianzum, where he wrote many poems all breathing a spirit of ardent love to Christ, without Whose grace he declares us incapable of all good. At the death of the Saint, his remains were interred at Nazianzen, but were translated in the year 950 to Constantinople with great pomp.

However, during the Crusades they were brought to Rome, and there lie beneath one of the altars of the Vatican. In one of the writings of Gregory of Nazianzen we have this expression of his perfect submission to God's Will and strong confidence in His Divine care of us : "What evil can befall us after all ? None certainly, unless we by our own fault lose God and virtue. Let all other things fall out as it shall please God ; He is the master of our life, and knows the reason of everything that befalls us. Let us only fear to do anything unworthy of our piety."



S. Severus of Ravenna.

A.D. 390.

THERE was a poor weaver of Ravenna who—hearing that the cathedral was full, for a vast assemblage had collected there to elect a new bishop—said to his wife, “I, too, will visit the minster and see what is going on.” Vincentia answered that to her mind he would do far better by remaining at home rather than show himself among the nobles and well-to-do citizens in his working clothes.

But he still desired to go, and after fresh objections from his wife, he departed with her last mocking words ringing in his ear, “Go, then—and get elected Bishop.”

So Severus the weaver entered the crowded cathedral, and being somewhat ashamed of his dress, which was covered with bits of wool, he stood behind the door.

The Holy Ghost being invoked to direct and govern the choice of the people, there came a white dove into the cathedral, which, after fluttering overhead, descended on Severus the poor weaver, resting on his head, though he tried to drive it away. Again, and yet again the white dove returned to him, and the people, regarding this as a sign that God's choice had fallen upon this humble man to be His Bishop, elected him to the office.

Meanwhile Vincentia was at home busied with household duties, when some one came running to tell her the wonderful news that her husband had been made Bishop of Ravenna. "A likely story," said she, laughing heartily at what she deemed a jest; "a man who tosses a shuttle would make a fine prelate." But others came in repeating the tale, whereupon Vincentia was speechless from

amazement at what seemed to her such an incredible thing.

Being consecrated to this office, Severus separated himself from the society of his wife for God's sake, but treated her with all the affection he would have shown to a sister until her death, which was soon followed by the death of her daughter Innocentia, and he laid them both in a tomb which had been prepared for himself.

Years passed and Severus felt that he was about to die, so he sang the High Mass and bade all the congregation depart save one server, who, by his command, closed the doors of the cathedral.

Then, clad in his pontifical robes, the good Bishop went to the sepulchre wherein he had laid the bodies of his wife and daughter so many years before, and raising the stone with the assistance of the server, he looked in. "My dear ones," he exclaimed, "make room for me, so that in death we shall not be divided;" and having thus spoken, he went .

down into the grave, and crossing his hands on his breast laid himself by the side of Vincentia's body, and then looking up to heaven he closed his eyes and expired.

In the year 836, the relics of the holy Bishop Severus were translated to Mayence, where the 22nd October is kept as his special festival. In art he is represented dressed as a Bishop, with a weaver's shuttle at his side.



S. Jerome.

A.D. 420.

JN a small town upon the confines of Italy and Stridonium S. Jerome was born, in the year 342.

Not being baptised he fell into many snares during his residence at Rome, while pursuing his education ; yet even then he had an intense desire after spiritual things, and on Sundays would visit the Catacombs, thinking much of the holy Apostles and glorious martyrs whose bodies rested there. After a time he journeyed to Treves, and, during his stay there his heart turned to God, and, resolving to serve Him only, he at once re-

nounced all worldly pleasures and affections, binding himself by a vow to the Almighty. Being baptised, Jerome went to a monastery at Aquileia, until the year 373, when, with three companions, he started on pilgrimage to those sacred places where Our Lord's sufferings were endured.

His next retreat was to the desert of Chalcida, lying between Syria and Arabia, where for four years he laboured with his hands for his own support ; and as one of his friends went home, and the other two died, he was left completely alone.

It was there that the remembrance of past sin became very bitter, so bitter that he was almost tempted to despair of God's mercy until peace was given to his soul, to which this interior desolation had been permitted, as a means of purification.

As a penance for so much self-indulgence and wasted time in early youth, he set himself to the study of Hebrew, which became a great help to him afterwards.

At Antioch S. Jerome was ordained a priest, but so unworthy did he consider himself, that it was long before he could be induced to take up the duties of his sacred office.

In the year 380 he went to study under S. Gregory Nazianzen, at Constantinople, and then passed on to Rome, where he undertook to instruct some of those Christian women who had specially devoted themselves to the service of God. In 385 S. Jerome went back to Palestine, where he devoted himself to teach children, and lived under a most austere rule of life.

About a year afterwards, S. Paula, with her daughter Eustochium, who had been instructed by the Saint, among the other Christian women in the city of Rome, went to Bethlehem, and there founded two monasteries, one for herself and the nuns who joined her, and the other for S. Jerome and his brethren.

It is told us of the holy man that whatever his occupation might be, whether teaching others or engaged in sacred writing, or only

taking necessary food, he had always certain words ringing in his ears, “Arise, ye dead, and come to judgment;” and thus he may indeed be numbered among those blessed ones whom the Lord finds watching and waiting for His coming. The circumstances of S. Jerome’s death are not known, but we are sure that it would be the passage to eternal rest. Many were his writings, but chief of all is the translation of the Scriptures into Latin; in learning he is considered to surpass nearly all the ancient Fathers of the Church, and to be a great authority upon all points of doctrine.

The holy S. Paula died before him, and, in speaking of her departure, S. Jerome says: “As if she were going to her beloved friends, and was about to leave strangers, she murmured, ‘Lord, I have loved the habitations of Thy House, and the place of the habitation of Thy glory,’ and so breathed out her soul, making the sign of the Cross upon her lips.”



S. Leo the Great.

A.D. 461.

LEO—surnamed the Great—was born in the city of Rome, though descended from a noble Tuscan family. He evinced great talent and ability even in childhood, and made rapid progress in his education. As he grew older he gave himself chiefly to the study of theology and the Holy Scriptures, and was then made archdeacon under Pope Celestine.

When in 440 Pope Sixtus died, Leo was chosen to fill his place, being considered eminently suited for that position by reason of his sanctity and learning. During the forty days

which elapsed before he could arrive at Rome, he was expected with the greatest impatience, and on the day of his episcopal consecration there were great public rejoicings. But S. Leo himself was full of fear at his exaltation, knowing that dignity and power often lead the soul from God, and thus he prayed : "Lord, I have heard Thy voice calling me, and I was afraid : I considered the work which was enjoined me, and I trembled. For what proportion is there between the burden assigned me and my weakness, this elevation and my nothingness ? O Thou Who has laid upon me this heavy burden, bear it with me, be my guide and my support."

With such dispositions, we may be sure God's grace was abundantly poured out upon S. Leo, enabling him to rule the Church wisely in those times of difficulty. Many errors and even vices existed in the Church, but with resolute gentleness he set himself to root them out inculcating holy precepts both by his life and his teaching. Ninety-six of the sermons

preached by this holy Pontiff have been preserved, and are full of wise and holy counsels.

When Carthage was taken by the Vandals, in the year 439, a large number of the heretic Manichees fled to Rome, and there feigned to be Catholics; but S. Leo found them out, and was enabled to induce many to give up their heresy, while he caused those who were obstinate to be banished from the city. The heresy of Eutychus now gave the holy Pontiff much trouble in the churches of the east, and at the same time the western empire was invaded by Attila, one of the most powerful barbarian kings. When it was known that he was marching towards Rome, S. Leo went out to meet him, and, contrary to all expectations, was received by him with great honour, and managed to get a treaty of peace concluded with the empire.

It was after this that the Vandals entered and plundered the city, and bore away many captives to Africa, where S. Leo sent alms for their relief and many zealous priests to instruct

and encourage them. For rather more than twenty-one years this great Pontiff ruled the Church, beloved by all ranks and conditions of men, and then, upon the 10th November, 461, he died, his body being interred in the church of S. Peter. It was afterwards translated to another place in the same church, and the name of Leo placed among the names of the many Saints whose intercession we may implore in all times of our need.



S. Dositheus.

A.D. 350.

DOSITHEUS had not the advantage of holy training, such as distinguished the lives of so many of God's Saints ; he grew up among soldiers, being page to an officer in the army, and had not the smallest knowledge of any religious truth.

But God's purposes in him were to be fulfilled, and thus one day he heard some words spoken concerning the Holy City, and was so anxious to see it, that he asked leave to accompany a friend of his master's, who was starting on a visit to Jerusalem. The permission was granted, to the great joy of Dositheus,

and, going first to Gethsemane, he saw there a picture which made a powerful impression on his mind. It was a picture of hell, and the agony of those suffering in its flames; well might the boy stand in silent surprise, for never yet had he heard of such a place or such punishment. A lady was there, who, perceiving the astonishment of Dositheus, put some questions to him, and finding him entirely untaught, began to explain what hell was.

The boy seemed impressed, and begged her to tell him how such a terrible place could be escaped. "By fasting and prayer," was her reply, and from that day Dositheus began to abstain from meat, and to pray as well as he could. His companions, finding out this change in him, laughed much, and said that he was going to become a monk; but their jesting only made the boy anxious to know what monks were, and being told, he resolved to hasten to the nearest monastery.

It happened that he sought one governed

by S. Serides, who, seeing that Dositheus was richly dressed, delicate of appearance, and young in years, refused to accept him, until overcome by his earnest entreaty, he put him into the hands of S. Dorotheus, to make of him what he could. Dorotheus at once perceived that the youth had not strength to support great austeries, and therefore set himself to correct his self-will, and discipline his tongue. He made Dositheus serve the hospital, where the sick welcomed his cheerful face, but sometimes he lost his patience with them. Once, being provoked greatly, he gave way to a fit of passion, using bad language; but a sudden compunction filled his heart, and his master found him crying on the floor of his cell, nor would he be comforted until assured that God would pardon him. One day Dorotheus overheard his pupil talking noisily. "Go, my son, and bring me a bottle of wine," he cried, and the young Dositheus ran and brought the flask to his master, who said that it was for his own use, adding, "It is the way

of the rollicking Goths to drink and shout ; I heard thy clamouring, and thought it needed but a bottle of wine to make a complete Goth of thee."

Besides thus exercising him in the restraint of his tongue, Dorotheus checked every feeling of vanity which betrayed itself, and even assumed a harshness towards his pupil, which was quite at variance with his ordinary gentleness.

"See, Father," said Dositheus one day, "have I not made the infirmary beds neatly ?"

"Thou art no doubt an excellent bed-maker," was the reply, "but thou art not much of a monk."

Another time the lad had a knife given him, which he showed to Dorotheus with evident delight.

"Art thou very much pleased with it, my son ?" said he.

"Indeed I am, Father."

"Then give it to the other brethren, and see that thou dost never touch it again," and Dositheus obeyed, without a murmur.

Being compelled to much study of the Holy Scriptures, the youth often found passages he did not comprehend, and would seek his master in order to have an explanation given him. On one such occasion, to prove his humility, Dorotheus answered, "I cannot attend to thee; go to the abbot," having previously suggested to the abbot how he should act towards the boy.

S. Dositheus carried his book to the Abbot Serides, and humbly asked that the obscure passage might be explained to him. Then the abbot boxed his ears, and said, "I have other things to do than to instruct an ignorant fellow like thee." Dositheus then went patiently back to his cell, and beginning to pray, found that the Holy Spirit illuminated what before seemed dark and incomprehensible.

Thus passed five years, and then the lay-brother began to spit blood, and exhibit other signs of illness. He heard that taking raw eggs was a certain cure, and try as he might, he could not divest his mind of the desire to

take the remedy. Having at last with much difficulty found that he could bear to be refused without a regret, he spoke to his master, who answered him, "Well, my son, thou shalt not prove the efficacy of the eggs, but of every other remedy."

So all that could be done for the young novice was attempted, yet he grew worse rather than better, nor could he continue his wonted exercise of prayer. "Pardon me, master, I cannot continue," he said; and Dorotheus answered him, "Give it up, my son, but keep God in thy mind, as though He were present beside thee."

As Dositheus grew worse he said he could bear no more, and then his old master bade him go in peace and stand before the Holy Trinity, praying for the brethren he left on earth, and thus the novice died. Some of the monks complained that Dorotheus should thus promise heaven and ask the intercession of one who had been but a humble lay-brother, neither having wrought miracles nor fasted;

but the old man answered them, "He fasted not, but he never gave way to his self-will." It came to pass some days after, that an aged monk in that hospital prayed earnestly that God would show him all the holy brethren of that community who had been received into rest. His prayer was granted, and in vision he beheld many aged Fathers, but in their midst was a young lay-brother with a hectic flush upon his cheek. When he told what he had seen, the monks knew that it was Dositheus who was in the company of the blessed in heaven.



S. Marcian, Hermit.

A.D. 388.

MN the ancient town of Cyrus there dwelt a young man of noble birth and comely appearance, before whom life opened brightly, promising him distinction and renown. But the voice of God had spoken to the heart of Marcian, and, casting aside all earthly good, he fled to the desert of Chalcis.

There he built for himself a small cell, so small that it was with difficulty that he could stand up within it, or lie at length, and yet there he gave himself wholly to prayer and meditation.

The hermit also found much happiness in the reading of Scripture; it was as if God spoke to him by its pages.

Great were the austerities of S. Marcian, for he had sought the desert as a place of penance; he ate only in the evening of each day, and then nothing but a quarter of a pound of bread; thus it seemed that prayer was the life of both soul and body.

The Saint had two disciples lodged in cells near his own, and one of these, by name Eusebius, looked through his small window to see his master at prayer, and often perceived a glorious light playing round his head.

Nothing roused Marcian to indignation, excepting when he was sought as one who could work miracles, which sometimes happened, as the fame of his sanctity was spread abroad. There came to him many people who had sick friends, beseeching his help; but Marcian withdrew from them in much displeasure, saying that he was but a sinful man who durst not expect favours from the Almighty. On

one occasion a person of some distinction came to him from Berea, having spent five days in accomplishing the journey; for he had a daughter who had lost her reason, and he cared not for weariness or trouble if she could but be restored to her right mind. Having heard of the holy hermit of Chalcis, this sorrowful father came to entreat him to bless a phial of oil with which he might anoint his daughter, but on reaching the cell he was told that Marcian would see no layman excepting at Easter-tide.

Upon this he sought another hermit, entreating him to be his messenger to the holy Marcian, and the hermit consented, and taking the phial of oil, repaired to his cell. Being admitted, the two solitaries conversed awhile together, but the heart of the messenger failed him, and he spoke not of the oil and went away without asking the blessing. Some days later he again sought Marcian, intending to prefer the father's earnest request, but again doubtless he would have feared to name it had not the Saint inquired as to the cause of a second visit.

Then the old man told his tale, and brought forth the phial of oil, but Marcian bade him return to his own dwelling, and refused to give the blessing. Sadly the officer went back to Berea; perhaps he thought it hard and cruel of the hermit to show no pity for his afflictions, but he thought it no longer when he found his daughter restored to reason, and learned that it had happened at the very time that S. Marcian refused to bless the oil for her use.

One day three Bishops sought the holy man, and he received them with much respect, but as they had come expecting to be edified by his conversation, they were disappointed to find he remained silent. "My Father," said one at last, "these illustrious prelates have come to receive a word of edification from thy lips." Marcian rose, and pointed to the horizon, "God speaks to us from all creation and through every creature," he said; and then, touching a copy of the sacred Scriptures, added, "He speaks to us also from the holy

books. What more can you desire from a poor sinner such as I?"

Another visitor who sought him was an aged hermit, by name Avitus, who appeared so worn and faint from his journey that Marcian bade his pupils prepare some herbs and vegetables for a meal. It was not then three o'clock in the afternoon, and this aged man made it a rule not to eat till sunset, therefore, when Marcian said to him, "My father, let us eat together," he hesitated; then the Saint explained that his custom was the same, but he went on to say, "Charity is dearer to God than fasting, for charity He commands us, and fasting is what we impose on ourselves. Sit down and eat with me." Upon this, Avitus yielded, and they made their humble meal, and abode together for three days, after which they met no more on earth.

But when the sister of Marcian sought him he would not see her, and only consented to speak briefly with her son, who offered him a store of provisions. "Did you give any to the

solitaries whom you passed on your way ?" demanded the holy man, and the youth was forced to confess he had not done so. "Then I will have none of your gifts," said the hermit. "You have not been prompted by the instincts of tender charity, but the instincts of flesh and blood."

As S. Marcian increased in years, and men knew he could not be long for this world, there was a great desire to make sure of possessing his relics; his nephew built a chapel to receive them, and several other persons of wealth followed his example.

The aged Saint was aware of these preparations to honour him after death, so he gave a strict command to Eusebius to bury him secretly as soon as he drew his last breath, and to let no one know his resting-place, save two of his disciples.

So for fifty years after S. Marcian had gone to heaven, none knew where his remains had been laid, until the only one of his disciples who still lived revealed the spot.

Then was the body solemnly translated, and Marcian, who had sought in life and death to be humble and obscure, was venerated as one of the holy ones whom God had chosen to glorify Him.



S. Euphrasia, Virgin.

A.D. 410.

EN early times, when the pious Antigonus was Governor of Syria, a child was born to him, and named after her good mother, Euphrasia. Both parents resolved that the little one should be trained from her birth to be wholly devoted to God; but even while she was yet an infant Antigonus died, and the Emperor took the fatherless child under his special protection.

It was a common custom in those days for little children to be promised in marriage, and thus at five years old Euphrasia was destined to be betrothed to the son of a wealthy senator.

But as years must pass before the completion of the marriage, the little girl was taken by her mother to see some relations who dwelt in Egypt, and while there they often went together to a convent at Thebaid, where the nuns made much of Euphrasia, and she as warmly returned their love.

At length the child implored to be allowed to stay always among those holy sisters, although she was but seven years old, which her mother agreed to, believing it but a fancy which would soon pass away. But little Euphrasia did not weary of the quiet cloister; they even tried the effect of harshness, and made her fast and learn the entire Psalter by heart, and sleep on the ground, yet she declared she would not leave them. Then the Superior said, "It is the grace of God working in her heart; leave the child:" and the weeping mother could not refuse, but lifting the little one up before an image of the Infant Saviour, cried, "My Lord Jesus Christ, receive this child into Thy protection since she desires Thee

only, and devotes herself to Thy service ;" and departing she burst into a flood of tears, and the whole community wept with her.

A few days later the Superior had the little seven-year-old novice into the chapel dressed in her tiny habit, and prayed God to complete the work His grace had begun in her; and then her mother came to Euphrasia asking if she were content. "Oh, mother," she cried, "it is my marriage garment given me on my espousals to Jesus."

Years passed by, and the mother of Euphrasia was dead, when the Emperor Theodosius wrote to Thebaid commanding the young nun to return at once to Constantinople for her marriage with the man to whom in infancy she had been promised. Euphrasia replied by so earnest an entreaty to be permitted to follow her vocation, that she was left in peace, and was even permitted to dispose of her wealth for the relief of the poor.

But now that she had reached the years of girlhood, great temptations were permitted to

molest her, so that she longed to see something of the world which she had renounced before she knew aught of its charms and pleasures. Believing that obedience would be her greatest safeguard, the Superior put Euphrasia to many trials. One day we read that, pointing to a heap of stones, she bade her carry them to a little sandhill some distance off. With perfect cheerfulness Euphrasia obeyed, and the stones were conveyed one by one according to the directions given her ; but when she came to say that the task was finished, she was bidden to bring them all back again. Next morning the mother called her, and said, "I have changed my mind about those stones, take them again to the top of the mound;" and so thirty times did Euphrasia carry them to and fro, yet never did her cheerful obedience fail her.

Her next post was in the kitchen, where she had to cook the food, bake the bread, chop wood, and such-like duties which were considered a sufficient exemption from attendance

at the midnight offices, yet Euphrasia was always in choir with the rest.

Meanwhile God gave her great graces, and even bestowed upon her the power of healing many who were sick, and otherwise working miracles.

When the time of Euphrasia's death drew near, one of the sisters begged that she would obtain for her the grace of being her companion in heaven, and when the Saint was dead, this nun, who was called Julia, wept and prayed upon her tomb, and in three days was permitted to follow her to her rest. When the aged Superior saw what the prayer of the holy Euphrasia had accomplished, she, too, began to entreat God to release her, and when morning dawned, the nuns, looking into her cell, found that she had indeed gone to join the spiritual daughters whom she had loved and guided on earth.



S. Lupicinus.

A.D. 430.

LHERE were two young brothers who, desiring a solitary life, climbed the rocks of the Jura, and establishing themselves in the wilderness lived on roots and berries until they found this scanty food fail. Then they went down to the plains, and entering the cottage of a poor woman told their story, and she so severely blamed them for turning aside from the life they had chosen, that they were filled with shame, and returned to the rocky mountains. One of these brethren was called Lupicinus, the other Romanus, and after a time they were

joined by more youths and a monastery was built, over which Lupicinus ruled as Abbot.

He wore a garment made out of the skins of beasts, and rough wooden shoes, and dealt very severely with his body, denying himself both in food and sleep save what was absolutely necessary to preserve life.

But when one of the other monks became ill through too rigorous a fast, Lupicinus pitied him for having been obstinate in adhering to a self-imposed rule, and carrying him to the garden attended to him there, bringing bread soaked in wine with oil poured upon it, to revive him. "Look, dear brother," he said, "away with your severity, and follow my example;" and eating of it himself he persuaded the monk to partake also, and thus gradually restored him to vigour. A story is told of two of the monks who, weary of well-doing and angry at some obedience given them, resolved to quit the monastery.

Under pretence of keeping a vigil they met

in the oratory at night and began making their plans, but Lupicinus heard them as he knelt in a corner at prayer and said, "How is this, my sons? Will ye go away and disturb our peace?" Dismayed, they fell down at his feet; but gently raising them he uttered not a word of reproach, and quietly resumed his prayer.

The two monks went back to their cells softened and ashamed, and one remained in the monastery until his death twenty years later: the second ran away afterwards but soon returned penitent.

When Lupicinus was far advanced in age he went to King Chilperic, then staying at Geneva, to plead for some who had been reduced to miserable slavery. It is said that as the old Abbot appeared in his raiment of skins, the throne on which the King sat trembled as if there was an earthquake. The senator who had been the oppressor, cried, "It is thou then, old impostor, who hast already insulted the Roman power for ten

years, by saying that all this region and its chiefs were hastening to their ruin."

"Yes, truly," replied Lupicinus; and pointing to the listening King, added, "Seest thou not that the Roman purple bows before a foreign judge? Take heed that some unexpected guest does not come before a new tribunal to claim thy lands and thy dominions."

Then Chilperic justified the old Abbot by having the oppressed ones restored to liberty; and moreover he offered to grant him land and vineyards for his abbey.

Lupicinus only accepted a small gift, fearing lest too great possessions might destroy a spirit of poverty in his monks, so the King said that they should receive each year an allowance of three hundred measures of corn, three hundred measures of wine, and one hundred gold pieces wherewith to purchase vestments.

When the aged Lupicinus lay on his death-bed he adhered still resolutely to the spirit of mortification which had distinguished his

earlier years. Asking for some water to quench his thirst, one of the brethren put in a spoonful of honey to sweeten it, but tasting it, the good Abbot turned away his head and denied himself this trifling alleviation of his suffering.



S. Gerasimus.

A.D. 475.

GHERE were in early days a large number of hermits who had placed themselves under the rule of Gerasimus, and made their dwelling in a retreat near the Jordan, where he had built seventy cells. Their life was most austere, for they only slept on rush mats and fire was never permitted in their cells, while on ordinary days they might eat only bread and dates, though on Sunday their food was somewhat better and a little wine was allowed. But Gerasimus the Abbot was still more severe with himself

than his rule enjoined and through Lent he was enabled to live without any nourishment save Christ's own most precious Body and Blood in the Holy Eucharist.

In art, the holy Abbot is commonly represented with a lion, in reference to an incident in his life which has been handed down to us. One day when he walked upon the bank of the Jordan, he perceived a lion which was roaring as if with pain, and limping ; it suffered Gerasimus to approach and even to examine its paw, which was greatly swollen, and in which he found a sharp splinter. Gently he took it out and bathed the paw ; and the natural ferocity of the lion was so subdued by his kindness that it followed the Abbot to his cell, and remained always with him, as faithful and obedient as if it had been a dog. An ass belonged to the monastery which was accustomed to carry water from the Jordan, and Gerasimus would send it out to pasture with the lion to guard it. One day, however, the lion strayed away, and meanwhile an Arab

passing by stole the ass, and when the lion returned to the monastery at night he was alone.

“Where is the ass?” cried Gerasimus, thinking it had been devoured, and the beast turned its head and looked behind it. “You have eaten him,” said the Abbot. “Well, what the ass did, you shall do now;” and so the lion was made to carry the water. After a time a soldier came to the monastery, and pitying the lion which seemed weary with its labour, gave money to Gerasimus to purchase an ass in place of that which had been stolen. But before he had the opportunity of buying one, the man who had committed the theft passed by the bank of the river with his camels and the stolen ass, at the sight of which the lion roared, and rushing forward frightened the driver away, and catching at the end of the halter led its old companion back to the monastery once more and so Gerasimus saw he had accused the faithful animal unjustly.

Five years passed, and Gerasimus died. At

the moment of his departure the lion was out, but when it returned it began searching uneasily for its master.

"Our old friend has gone away," said one of the brethren to it. "He has left us orphans, and is in God's keeping; but here is food—take and eat."

But the lion would not touch anything, and pacing to and fro roared again and again, and the more it was caressed so much the more it seemed to be distressed.

"Come with me, then," said one of the hermits; "I will show you where he is laid;" and he led the lion to the tomb of Gerasimus.

Then the poor fond animal stretched its body on the sand of the grave and moaned, nor could any one persuade it to come away; and a few days after they found it dead upon the ground beneath which the remains of the holy old Abbot were resting.



S. Germanus.

A.D. 448.

 HIS Saint was born at Auxerre, of noble parents, about the year 378 or 380, and was partly educated at Rome. He was not one of those who in youthful days gave promise of great holiness, for though he avoided vice he had no aspirations after a life of perfection, and cared not for prayer or mortification, but found his chief pleasure in hunting.

When Amatus, Bishop of Auxerre, began to think as to who should be his successor, it was given him to know that the gay and frivolous Germanus would become so changed by God's

grace as to be specially fitted for that position ; and accordingly Amatus compelled him to be ordained a deacon, nor did he resist lest he should be displeasing God. From that day the character of Germanus underwent a complete change ; he abandoned the chase and devoted himself to hard study, and having already married a lady of rank named Eustacia, he separated himself from her that he might belong wholly to God. Soon afterwards Amatus died, and the clergy elected Germanus to fill his place.

Being ordained Bishop, he began living most austereiy, never eating but in the evening and then taking only barley bread, having threshed and ground the grain himself. Next his skin he wore a hair-shirt, and his bed was strewn with ashes.

Germanus was most kind and charitable to the poor, loving to wait upon them and serve them with his own hands.

He discovered the sepulchres of many martyrs who had suffered under Aurelian, and

whose bodies had been thrown into a pit, from which he caused them to be removed to a monastic church built specially to receive them.

Many other churches were erected and richly endowed by Germanus; and thus he was reduced to that complete poverty which he desired because it had been the portion of his Master.

When S. Germanus, in company with S. Lupus, was deputed to go to Britain to preach against the Pelagian heresy, he passed through Paris, and then occurred the meeting with Géneviève, the future saint of France, when he received the vow whereby she consecrated herself to God.

Arriving in Britain, S. Germanus held a conference with the Pelagians at Verulam and by his eloquence gained a complete triumph over them. A tribune and his wife, who were at the assembly, brought to the Saint their little daughter who was blind, entreating him to pray for her. After raising his heart to God, Germanus took from his

neck a small reliquary which he always wore, and in presence of a vast crowd laid it upon the sightless eyes, and immediately the child cried out that she could see, to the great joy of her parents and the amazement of those who witnessed the miracle.

So great an impression was then made, that the two Bishops had no more opposition to bear, and after a successful mission they went to offer thanks to God at the tomb of S. Alban. Causing the sepulchre of that great martyr to be opened, Germanus deposited his relics within it, taking in exchange a little of the dust which still showed slight marks of S. Alban's blood, and returning to Auxerre he built a church to contain it, dedicated in honour of the Proto-Martyr of Britain.

In 447 S. Germanus was again sent to Britain with Severus, a pupil of S. Lupus, for his companion, and he once more visited Géneviève in passing through Paris.

He made it his special work upon that second mission to seek out those who had

been led into heresy, and was happily successful in converting great numbers. During his stay in Britain he again wrought several miracles. He afterwards undertook a journey to Ravenna to seek the Emperor Valentinian, and prevail on him to grant pardon to the people of Brittany who had revolted.

Hoping to avoid any demonstrations of public joy, Germanus entered Ravenna at night; but his precautions were useless, for he found a crowd awaiting him, and the Emperor and his mother Placidia greeted him with great joy.

Knowing that the holy Bishop would not touch meat, Placidia sent him other dainties heaped upon a silver dish, in return for which he begged her to accept a barley loaf upon a wooden platter; and the Empress had it encased with gold, and the loaf preserved, and several cures were wrought from it.

One day after matins had been sung, S. Germanus was conversing with the Bishops on spiritual matters; he presently said to them,

"My brethren, I recommend my passage to your prayers. Methought I saw this night our Saviour, Who gave me provisions for a journey, and told me it was to go into my native country and receive eternal rest." It was but a very few days later that he fell ill, to the great distress of the people of the city. The Empress Placidia went to visit the Saint, and then he begged her to see that his remains were sent back to his own country, to which she agreed, although she would rather have desired that he should be interred at Ravenna.

After the illness had lasted seventeen days S. Germanus died and Placidia took his reliquary, while S. Peter Chrysologus possessed himself of the cowl and hair-shirt he had worn, the rest of his clothing being divided between the six other Bishops.

The funeral was celebrated with the utmost magnificence, and in every town through which the procession passed, people came out to meet it, showing profound respect and

honour. The clergy of Auxerre came as far as the Alps to receive the body of their holy Bishop, and having brought it into the city exposed it for six days to the veneration of the faithful, after which it was interred on the 1st of October in the monastery of S. Maurice, which was one of S. Germanus' own foundations.

Many miracles had been wrought by the Saint in his life, but many more were worked at his shrine. In the year 859 the body of Germanus was translated to the church of Auxerre, which had been rebuilt for its reception, but in 1567 the Huguenots destroyed the shrine and scattered the relics. Many ancient churches in England were dedicated to this great Saint; and a chapel near Verulam, in which he had preached during his mission to Britain, was afterwards dedicated under his name.

In art, S. Germanus is often represented with an ass at his feet, as a legend tells that once while dining with the Empress Placidia

he was told that some poor person was grieving sorely at the death of an ass which had been useful in helping him to gain a livelihood, at which Germanus restored the animal to life to the great joy of its owner.



S. Lupus.

A.D. 478.

LHIS Saint did not, like some, devote his first youth to the special service of God. He was learned and eloquent, and was engaged in pleading at the bar for some years, but a voice seemed to call him to forsake all things and follow Christ wholly, and thus with the full consent of his wife, he left her and entered the celebrated abbey of Lerins, then under the rule of S. Honoratus. Having sold a great part of his estate, and given the proceeds to the poor, he remained in the monastery for a year, and then went to Macon in Burgundy to sell an estate there; but

when he was preparing to return to Lerins he was met by the tidings that he had been chosen Bishop to the See of Troyes. Though raised to this dignity LUPUS remained as mortified, as humble of heart as he had been in the quiet of the monastery, and he still practised poverty in so far as it was possible. Every second night was given to continued prayer, and he lay on a hard board, nor would he ever wear any other garments than a single tunic, beneath which was a hair-cloth.

For twenty years LUPUS passed a life of great mortification, while he laboured in all the duties of his office with untiring zeal.

When the Pelagian heresy spread in Britain, the Christians there wrote to implore the Bishops of Gaul to send them priests to combat the error, and S. GERMANUS of Auxerre, and S. LUPUS of Troyes, were the two selected to journey to our island, and strive by their preaching and their prayers to banish the evil. God granted them great success, and they then returned to their own flocks,

where they laboured more than ever to turn sinners to repentance.

S. Lupus had much influence upon the hearts of men, and many were induced by his words to amend their lives.

Great troubles afflicted the western empire, and Attila, calling himself "The scourge of God," brought his army of barbarians to overrun Gaul. Rheims, Cambray, and other cities had already been plundered; Troyes was the next to suffer from his incursion, but the holy Bishop Lupus had recourse to prayer to the Almighty to avert this evil, and for many days lay prostrate on the ground, fasting and weeping, thereby to obtain the safety of his people.

Then, in his episcopal robes, he went to meet Attila, followed by his clergy, bearing a large cross, and asked him "who he was."

"The scourge of God," replied the barbarian king.

Then Lupus answered, "Let us respect whatever comes to us from God; but if you are the scourge wherewith Heaven chastises

us, remember that you must do nothing but what that Almighty hand which governs you permits."

Greatly impressed by these words, and by the courage of S. Lupus, Attila promised to spare Troyes, and thus it happened that the prayers of the Saint proved more efficacious than armed men in protecting the city.

As Attila retired from Troyes he sustained a defeat at the hands of the Roman general, and believing the presence of S. Lupus would be a security, he sent to beg his company as far as the Rhine.

The good Bishop complied, but the Roman generals were so displeased with him for doing so that he was compelled to absent himself from Troyes for two years, which time he spent in perfect retirement and great austerity of life, and then returned to his bishopric, having by patience overcome the ill-feeling of men.

In 479 S. Lupus died, his body being interred in the cathedral which bears his name, called in French "S. Leu."



S. Pulcheria.

A.D. 457.

PHE life of this pious Empress was marked by a constant devotion to the Church of Christ, and a great charity to his poor and suffering servants, so that her power and wealth and influence were employed wholly for the glory of God.

She was grand-daughter of Theodosius the Great, and daughter to the Emperor Arcadius. When but five years old she lost her mother, and at the age of nine her father also died, so that while still a girl Pulcheria was given a share in the imperial dignity of her younger brother, and intrusted with the super-

intendence of his education, for she had judgment and discretion far beyond her years. Being full of love to God, she strove to surround her brother with those whose influence should be for good, and it was from her that he learned the practice of prayer and a love for the doctrines of the Holy Catholic Church.

This young maiden made a solemn vow of consecration to God, and she also induced her younger sisters to do the same, choosing Our Blessed Lord as their only spouse.

Thus the imperial palace became somewhat like a religious house, for few indeed were the visitors admitted there, and the time of these three royal sisters was given to prayer, pious exercises, and works of industry, each hour having its own appointed duty.

When at a loss how to act in any matter, Pulcheria had recourse to prayer, and then, after listening to the advice of those whom she believed to be prudent counsellors, she formed her resolution.

She was endowed with much mental ability,

and understood the Greek and Italian tongues ; and she encouraged the spread of learning in the empire, which flourished under her wise government.

After the marriage of Theodosius, Pulcheria retired to a country house, hoping to spend the remainder of her days there, giving her entire time to prayer and good works. Her brother had caused her great sorrow, and proved himself most ungrateful for all her devoted love and care ; yet she made no complaint, for she desired to be despised and forgotten by the world, and by all creatures.

But under the imprudent rule of Theodosius, dangers threatened to overwhelm the Eastern Church and Empire, and in obedience to the desire of the holy Pontiff Leo, Pulcheria went to Court, and seeking her brother, succeeded in awaking him to a sense of the evils he had wrought, so that he repented before his death, which soon followed.

S. Pulcheria was now sole mistress of the empire, and believing it necessary to have

some wise partner in the duties of such a position, she accepted the hand of Marcian, but only on condition that though his wife in name, she still remained the consecrated spouse of Christ. Marcian agreed, and living together as friends, they both strove to serve God and advance the interests of the Church in their empire.

Pulcheria caused three churches to be built in honour of the Blessed Virgin, and many monasteries, convents, and churches were richly endowed by her.

Upon the 18th September, 453, she died, charging Marcian to distribute all her private property in charities; and having attended to these wishes, he followed her to a heavenly reward in the year 457. The memory of S. Pulcheria is blessed for her many virtues and the great services she rendered to the cause of religion.



S. Severinus.

A.D. 482.

HE whole of Europe was troubled by war; towns which had once been prosperous were reduced to a state of misery and famine; the people who dwelt on the shores of the Danube knew not from which quarter a fresh invasion should come, when there appeared among them a man who would not tell his country nor his parentage, but who called himself Severinus. He had journeyed to that land from the neighbourhood of Carthage for no other purpose than to lead men to God, and choosing one of the most miserable towns for his abode, he began

to live as a hermit. One day he went to the church and uttered an earnest warning of coming destruction unless both clergy and people began to pray and afflict themselves to appease the anger of an offended God; but they one and all refused to believe in his predictions.

Thereupon he left the town, prophesying the day and hour when it would be destroyed; and passing on to the next, he repeated to them the same warning. Even as they listened, an old man approached the city gate and told them that it had happened as the holy man had foretold, and the town from which he had come had been already sacked by the enemy. The people then believed in Severinus, being warned by the fate of their neighbours, and for three days gave themselves up to fasting, almsgiving, and prayer. Upon the third day a sudden earthquake happened, and the barbarian force, which had been garrisoned within the walls even before the coming of Severinus, were so terrified that they insisted

on the gates being opened, and, rushing out, slew each other. Thus was that town delivered.

A famine now spread in Vienna, and the people having heard of the holy Severinus, sent to beg him to come and help them. He went, and preached also to them of repentance and almsgiving, but many of the rich concealed their supply of corn and would not relieve the sufferings of the poor. By a revelation from God, S. Severinus discovered that a rich woman named Procula had thus hidden her store; and calling her publicly forth, he reproved her avarice, and desired her at least to throw it into the Danube to feed the fish if she would not give it to the Lord's poor. Much ashamed and humbled, Procula gave corn to the poor, but further relief was at hand, for vessels were seen coming down the Danube laden with provisions, having been set free from the ice-bound river Enns at the prayer of the holy Severinus.

But there came some German barbarians

to attack the city, who carried off both people and cattle, and the officer Mamertinus had so few soldiers that he feared to face the enemy. With promises of help from on high, Severinus encouraged him to do battle with the barbarians, only requiring that all who were made captive should be brought to him.

Mamertinus with his few men started in pursuit of the plunderers, who, when only two miles from the city, fled, leaving their weapons behind them; some were, however, taken prisoners and brought to Severinus, who, after giving them food and drink, let them go.

A great dread of Severinus fell upon those hordes of robbers, for they saw that in answer to his prayers the God of Christians fought for His servants.

The Saint now left Vienna and erected a cell for himself not far out of the city, and other men being attracted by his piety, built themselves cells near him. Often he would have departed from them and retired to some complete solitude where no one should follow him,

but he prayed to God, and light was given him to understand such was not the Divine Will.

But if he might not live apart from all human fellowship, he could still practise great austerities, and we find his life one continual fast, while in the most severe weather, when the Danube was frozen over, he went unshod.

There came to visit him Odoacer, afterwards the barbarian King of Italy, with his brother ; and arrived at the cell of the Saint, Odoacer found it so low and small that he had to stand stooping within it.

“ Go to Italy,” said Severinus, “ even though thou art clothed in ragged sheepskins ; thou shalt soon give greater gifts to thy friends.” Odoacer went, and when he became king he remembered the prophecy of the Saint, and sent a message to him declaring he should have any boon he liked to ask. The holy Severinus had no request to make for himself ; he only besought the new-made king to pardon some Romans whom he had banished.

Many are the marvellous accounts handed down to us of the power of this great Saint; even the waters of the Danube were not permitted to rise above the mark of the Cross which he had cut upon the posts of a wooden chapel. One night he watched by the corpse of a priest named Silvius, and in the early dawn of morning he called on the dead man to speak to his brethren. Immediately the closed eyes were opened, and Severinus then asked whether he felt any desire to return to life? "Keep me no longer here," was the reply; "do not cheat me of the perpetual rest which I have already found:" and again closing his eyes he was still for ever.

During the space of two years S. Severinus warned his friends of his approaching end. He foretold, also, that the people should go forth from this town and find refuge in some other Roman province.

He then sent for the Rugian King and his wife Gisa, and told them they would be accountable to God for the people over whom

they had ruled, and it would be wise for themselves if they ceased their cruelty and oppression. In the month of January Severinus was taken ill, and summoning his brethren he spoke of their approaching departure from the city, and begged that his bones might not be left behind; then, having received the Holy Eucharist, he asked them to sing the Psalm which begins, “Praise the Lord in His saints, and let all that hath breath praise the Lord,” and immediately after he passed to his rest.

No sooner was he dead than the monastery was seized and the vessels of the altar carried away by the barbarians; but Odoacer sent from Italy to rescue the people, who took with them the corpse of S. Severinus, which exhaled the most sweet fragrance.

It was deposited in the villa of Lucullus, at Naples, by the side of the body of the last Emperor of Rome; and afterwards a church was raised in his honour which bears his name, and where his relics are now preserved.



S. Fulgentius.

A.D. 533.

FHERE dwelt in ancient times at Carthage an honourable family who lost their possessions at the time of the invasion of the Vandals, and therefore were forced to retire to a city in the province of Byzacene, where a son was born who received the name of Fulgentius.

His father died during the child's earliest infancy, and his training devolved wholly upon his mother, who was gifted with singular intelligence. It was she who taught her little son to speak Greek, and to commit passages from Homer to memory; but possessing

herself great piety, she gave even more attention to his religious education.

So Fulgentius grew up a virtuous youth, caring for spiritual books, holy meditation, and frequent prayer more than any worldly pleasure. He loved to visit the different monasteries, whenever he had opportunity, and observing the happy content of the brethren, he began to think no life was so much to be desired. As he grew older he would often retire from his worldly occupations and give a time to special prayer, and it was in one such retreat that a sermon of S. Augustine's was the means of deciding him to enter the religious state. The sermon was upon the 36th Psalm—which exhorts men to despise the world and shows how brief is the prosperity of the wicked, and says, “Delight in the Lord, and He will give thee the desires of thy heart;” promising that “The mouth of the just shall meditate wisdom, and his tongue shall speak of judgment. The law of God is in his heart, and his footsteps shall not slip.”

Thus decided as to his future course, Fulgentius applied to a certain Bishop named Faustus to receive him into a monastery over which he ruled, and of which he had been the founder in Byzacene ; but a humiliation came to him, for the Bishop repelled him, saying, “ Live less delicately as a layman, then shall I believe in thy vocation.”

Fulgentius besought him the more, and kissing his hand said, “ He who gave the desire is mighty to enable me to fulfil it. Suffer me, my father, to tread in thy footsteps.”

Faustus still hesitated, but at length suffered the young man to remain, saying, “ Perhaps my fears are unfounded.”

When it was rumoured among his friends and fellow-citizens that Fulgentius had become a monk, his mother ran to the monastery crying out in her distress that she being a widow could not consent to be robbed of her only child, nor could the Bishop find means of calming her. She insisted on seeing Fulgentius, but Faustus knew that no good could re-

sult from such an interview, so he deemed it necessary to refuse his permission.

So loud were her cries and prayers that the youth heard his mother's voice from within the monastery, and it caused him great sorrow ; yet he knew that Christ had called him to leave all and follow Him, and so he remained steadfast in his determination.

His austerities were severe, and perhaps in his first fervour lacked discretion, for we read that he brought a severe illness upon himself from fasting, but happily recovered, and was afterwards able to maintain the same strict abstinence from oil and everything savoury.

When a time of persecution came, Fulgentius was sent by the Bishop to another monastery which was under the authority of an abbot whom he had known well in the world, and who insisted on making Fulgentius rule jointly with him. For six years they divided the government of the monastery between them, Felix attending to the bodily necessities of

the brethren, and Fulgentius instructing them in Divine love.

In the year 449 the country was ravaged by the Numidians, and the two abbots were compelled to fly to a city in Africa, where by the order of an Arian priest they were commanded to be scourged. Felix was by his own request the first to receive these cruel blows, and then Fulgentius was seized on. Now he being delicate of constitution could scarcely bear the pain of the scourging, and seeking to gain a brief respite from the violence of the Arian priest he cried, "I will say something if I am permitted."

Thinking that he was about to recant, the priest ordered the blows to cease, whereupon Fulgentius began a narration of his travels; and finding he had no thought of saying more, the scourging was continued, and then he and his companion were driven away.

The Arian Bishop, hearing of this treatment, was displeased, for he was acquainted with some of the relatives of Fulgentius, and he reproved the priest with much severity.

Resolving now to visit the deserts of Egypt, Fulgentius embarked in a ship which was bound for Alexandria; but it happened that they touched at Sicily and S. Eulalius, Abbot at Syracuse, dissuaded him from his purpose by saying that Egypt was full of heretics. Before returning home Fulgentius visited Rome, the grandeur of which made a deep impression on him. "How beautiful must heaven be," he was wont to say, "if Rome is so glorious."

Arriving again at Byzacene he was ordained priest, and from many places a request came that he might be given them as a Bishop; but Fulgentius, fearing so great a responsibility, sought to conceal himself.

It was God's Will to appoint him a shepherd over the flock, and thus the citizens of Ruspe came to the cell of Fulgentius and forced him to go with them to the cathedral for his consecration.

As Bishop, the holy man maintained the strictness of life he had practised as a monk, eating only the coarsest food and dressing in the plainest garb.

He would only wear a cloak of sombre hue, and beneath it his milk-coloured habit ; and in the severest weather he wore nothing but this habit when he was within the monastery, nor did he loosen even his girdle when he slept.

At the time that the heretic King Thrasimund ordered all Catholic bishops into banishment, Fulgentius had almost completed the building of a monastery, over which he destined his friend Felix to rule ; but by this order he and some sixty prelates were exiled to Sardinia, where their wants were provided for by the liberality of Symmachus, then Pope. During this time King Thrasimund sent for Fulgentius, and putting the objections to the Catholic faith before him, commanded him to answer them. The Saint complied, and so effectually that the King in sending him further objections required that his answers should be heard by none but himself, lest they might be too convincing.

For a time Fulgentius was allowed to reside in Carthage, but as the Arians began to complain

of his success in teaching, he was sent on board a ship one stormy night so that the people should not witness his departure. But the wind was contrary, and the vessel was driven into port again by the dawn of day; and hearing that the Bishop was upon it, the people of Carthage crowded to bid him farewell, and he was even able to go on shore to offer up the Holy Sacrifice and give Communion to the faithful.

“Grieve not,” he said to one who wept bitterly as he again went on board the ship; “I shall shortly return, and the true faith of Christ will flourish in this realm.”

This prediction was fulfilled when in 523 Thrasimund died and was succeeded by Hilderic, who ordered the exiled prelates to be restored to their rights, and freedom of worship accorded to all Catholics.

Great was the rejoicing in Carthage as these holy men disembarked, and especially did they reverence Fulgentius, who passed through the city speaking words of comfort and blessing to his friends before he went on to Ruspe.

Arrived there, he found many abuses to remedy, for during a persecution of seventy years much evil had risen up and faith was feeble; but so gently did he set about his work of reform that all hearts were gained.

About a year before his death the good Bishop retired to the little island of Ciracinia, where apart from all business he might prepare his soul to meet God, but the needs of his people recalled him to Ruspe.

His last illness was attended with much pain, but he bore it cheerfully and prayed, "Lord grant me patience now, and afterwards pardon." Feeling the end very near, he called his clergy, and begged forgiveness if he had shown severity or in any way offended them; that done, he resigned his soul into God's keeping upon the evening of the 1st January, in the year 533, when he was sixty-five years of age.

The relics of S. Fulgentius are preserved at Bourges, where the festival of his translation is kept upon the 16th May.



S. Cæsarius, Archbishop of Arles.

A.D. 542.

CÆSARIUS was born in the year 470, and seemed from his earliest days to be imbued with that spirit of piety which had distinguished his family during several generations. Before he was seven years old this little boy could not bear to pass a beggar without giving an alms, and he would take off some article of his own clothing if he had nothing else to bestow, and put it upon these poor needy ones for the sake of Christ, the lover of poverty.

At eighteen years of age Cæsarius resolved to avoid the distractions and temptations of a

secular life, and he implored the Bishop of Challons to give him the religious habit, and two years later he withdrew to the monastery of Lerins, which had produced so many eminently holy men. In that house, Cæsarius was a model of virtue, so regular in his observance of duty, so humble, meek and obedient, that all were greatly edified. The Abbot soon appointed him cellarer, and in holding that office he was so scrupulously severe that some of the monks complained ; and thus it was necessary to take the charge from him, that peace might be preserved. Cæsarius gladly retired from the office, feeling that he should have more time for uninterrupted prayer and contemplation ; but becoming ill he was sent to Arles for the advice of a physician.

Eonius, then Archbishop, knew something of Cæsarius, and now asked the Abbot for permission to keep him at Arles, which being granted he ordained the young monk deacon, and subsequently priest, and then appointed him Abbot over a monastery near the city.

Three years later Eonius died, having just recommended Cæsarius for his successor, and he was elected in the year 501, at the age of thirty years. The first thing the new Archbishop did was to have Divine Office sung in the church daily, begging all the laity to attend unless hindered by necessary business. He began, too, to instruct his flock in the practice of prayer, telling them that to address the Almighty with their lips only was indeed a mockery. “A man worships that object on which his mind is intent, during prayer,” he said. “Whoever in his prayers thinks of the house he is building, adores that rather than God.”

Upon every Sunday and holy-day, Cæsarius preached, and if prevented doing so he had some homily read to the people, and that they might never depart from church without some special instruction, he had some sermon or homily read after vespers.

One hundred sermons by Cæsarius have been published, which show that his style of

teaching was very plain and natural, indeed he had a great dislike to studied discourses.

He built a convent for women at Arles, assisting in the work with his own hands; and when completed, he put it under the rule of his sister, who had received the habit of religion at Marseilles. The rule followed by this community was drawn up by S. Cæsarius. They made their own clothing, and employed themselves in embroidery and other work for persons in the world, but all that was used in their own chapel was of plain linen, or woollen cloth, nothing ornamented or costly being permitted them. Two hours a day were allotted to reading, and also at the time for work one sister read aloud to the others. Later, the rule of this convent was changed for that of S. Benedict.

Alaric, King of the Visigoths, most unjustly banished Cæsarius to Bordeaux, and while residing there a terrible fire broke out during the night. The people were much alarmed, and came in crowds to the Saint beseeching

him to pray that the flames might be extinguished ; he was ever after considered to have saved the city, because when he prostrated himself before the fire it immediately subsided.

Soon afterwards Alaric recalled him to Arles, having discovered that he had been falsely accused, and when he approached the city the people came towards him in procession, singing as they walked, and bearing in their hands lighted tapers in his honour.

In the year 508 Arles was besieged, and the Goths imprisoned Cæsarius on the groundless suspicion of his having given the city up to the French and Burgundians ; but he was soon proved innocent and set free. Being much distressed at the sufferings of the people, he relieved them as far as he could from the treasury of the church ; and when this failed, he melted down the chalices and patens, saying, “Our Lord celebrated His last supper in earthen dishes, not in plate ; we therefore need not scruple to part with His vessels for the

ransom of those whom He has redeemed with His life.”

When the King of the Visigoths was dead, Theodoric the Ostrogoth seized upon the dominions in Languedoc and Spain, and became so displeased with the charity of S. Cæsarius to the prisoners, that he had him brought by a guard of soldiers to Ravenna.

When the Saint came into the presence of Theodoric he was so moved by his venerable appearance that he received him with the greatest respect, and afterwards said, “I trembled when he came in, for he had the countenance of an angel. I can harbour no thoughts to the prejudice of such a man.”

He then sent to Cæsarius a silver basin, weighing sixty pounds, containing three hundred pieces of gold, with this message: “Holy Bishop, the King, your son, entreats you to accept this present, and to make use of it for his sake.”

S. Cæsarius was unaccustomed to use plate at his own table, so he sold the basin, and

ransomed several captives with the money thus raised. The King, instead of being displeased, spoke so admiringly of this marvellous charity that the richest nobles vied with each other as to who should bestow the largest alms upon Cæsarius for the deliverance of the prisoners.

From Ravenna the Saint went to Rome, where he received the pallium from Pope Symmachus, who appointed him Vicar of the Apostolic See.

In 514 S. Cæsarius returned to Arles, and for some years continued to instruct his spiritual children ; but in his seventy-second year he began to feel the approach of death, and in speaking of the festival of S. Augustine, said, “I hope I shall die about that time ; you know how much I always loved his truly Catholic doctrine.” Being too weak to walk, he gave directions that he should be carried to the convent of his nuns to try and comfort them under the thought of his coming departure ; and having given them his blessing he returned to the church and died in the presence of

several bishops and priests, on the eve of the feast he had desired to be the day of his death.

Many sick were cured by the relics of this Saint, who in life had wrought numerous miracles by the power of God.



S. Cadoc.

A.D. 540.

FHERE was an ancient Welsh King who had heard so much of the beauty of the daughter of a neighbouring chief, that he resolved to carry her away to be his bride. Her father hastened to follow and rescue her, and a sharp encounter took place between their followers ; but the King escaped with the lady, though two hundred of his men were killed in the affray. These were the parents of S. Cadoc, who founded in after years the monastery of Llancarvan.

He was baptised by a holy Irish monk upon the day following his birth, and entrusted to

his care as soon as he had reached the age of seven years. For twelve years the young Welsh prince dwelt with the monk, whom he waited upon as a humble follower, and from whom he learned the rudiments of Latin. During that time Cadoc had learned to love retirement ; while lighting the fire and cooking his master's food, and performing other such duties, he had time to think and pray, and he resolved on the monastic life rather than to succeed to his father's throne. After spending three years at Lismore in Ireland for the better prosecution of his studies, he returned again to Wales, placing himself under a famous teacher just arrived there from Italy. His school was so small that the pupils had not sufficient food, and we hear of Cadoc sitting over his books in his cell, when a mouse came out of a hole in the wall, and jumping on the table, dropped a grain of corn before him. The boy started up and followed the nimble little animal to the cellar, where to his joy he discovered enough

corn to feed his master and all the scholars for several days.

Once when he had retired to a wood, his mind full of the hope of a monastic life, he saw an enormous wild boar coming out of its den. It made three bounds, stopping after each, and glaring at the young stranger, but it did not offer to molest him ; Cadoc took three branches to mark the spot where the boar had three times bounded, and that became in after times the site of the church, dormitories, and refectory of Llancarvan.

An old legend tells that while this abbey was building, two of the monks grew idle and disobedient, refusing to assist in the necessary labour, and exclaiming, “Are we oxen that we should be compelled to drag timber?” Even as they murmured, two stags came out of the neighbouring wood and took their place, which gave the abbey its name, “The Church of the Stags.”

When the chapel was almost completed, to

which end Cadoc had laboured hard and long with his own hands, a strange monk came that way, bearing a bag which contained metal and various tools, and also a bell. His name was Gildas, he said, and he was on his way to Rome to offer this bell for the altar of S. Peter ; and Cadoc, taking the bell and sounding it, found its tone so sweet that he greatly desired it for the chapel of Llancarvan. Gildas went his way and presented the bell to the Pope, but the Holy Father was quite unable to sound it, so then both he and Gildas knew that it was intended only for S. Cadoc ; and on being given to him it rang as sweetly as ever.

When the abbey was completed and inhabited, a strong band of robbers came to attack and pillage it ; but S. Cadoc and his monks went out to meet them, armed only with their harps, and chanting psalms, which so alarmed the robbers that they turned and fled.

Another time, a chief whose son had been received into the monastery came up with his followers to seize him and destroy the build-

ing, but Cadoc went out to meet him bathed in sunshine from heaven, which gave them a light in the darkness, that bewildered them, and in sudden shame they departed to their own homes.

In his peaceful cloister life the Saint did not forget his father, and prayed earnestly for his conversion from sin; at last he was inspired to send three of his monks to the dwelling of his parents, and so powerfully did they preach repentance that the mother of Cadoc—the beautiful Gwladys—was moved by their words, and persuaded her husband to go with her to their holy son, to whom they made public confession of their sins. Then they chanted with him the psalm, “Exaudiat te Dominus,” and departing, established themselves in two poor huts on the bank of the river, where they worked for their own livelihood.

But the Saxon invasion forced Cadoc to fly to Britanny, where he founded a new monastery, and maintained his austere life. He

had many scholars whom he made to learn Virgil by heart, and one day while walking with his chief friend he began to lament and weep because the poet he so much admired was perhaps in hell. “*Perhaps,*” repeated the other; “there is not a doubt that he must be damned;” but at that moment a gust of wind blew Cadoc’s book into the sea. Returning to his cell he said, “I will neither break bread nor taste water until I know the fate of him who sung upon earth so sweetly;” and then he fell asleep, and dreaming, thought that a soft voice said to him, “Pray for me, and weary not of praying, for I yet shall sing eternally the mercy of God.”

Next morning a salmon was brought to the monastery, which being opened, was found to contain the book which had been blown from the Saint’s hand into the sea. After some years Cadoc left his own community and returned to Britain; not indeed to his much loved retreat of Llancarvan, but to dwell among the Saxons for the purpose of instruct-

ing and consoling those Christians who had survived the conquest and were living in slavery. One morning, while celebrating Holy Mass, a band of Saxons entered the church and crowded up to the altar; but the Saint appeared unconscious of their presence. Then a chief went up to him and pierced him through the heart. Falling on his knees, S. Cadoc cried, "Dear Lord, my King, my Saviour, grant me one grace—protect these Christians;" and then he was dead, and great mourning filled the hearts of those whom he had consoled and strengthened in their many sufferings, but who remained faithful to truth, assisted by the prayers he offered for them before the throne of God.



S. David.

A.D. 544.

DHE birth of S. David had been foretold more than thirty years by Patrick, the Apostle of Ireland, when he was passing through Wales, for an angel had revealed to him that a saint would be given to that country, who should greatly glorify God.

So in the year 462 the child was born, of whom such future holiness had been predicted, and he was grandson to the king of the province which in the present day is called Cardigan. The childhood and early youth of S. David were spent in the care of his mother, after which he went to the Isle of Wight, then

known as Vectis, that he might receive the instruction of S. Paulinus, who dwelt there in great retirement.

At length S. David went back to his own country and erected a monastery, where he soon was successful in gathering together a community to practise a simple rule much the same as that which was followed by S. Anthony and the monks of Egypt. A Pagan chief who dwelt near, did all in his power to disturb and trouble them, but was unsuccessful in sending them away as he had hoped. These brethren were dependent on their own exertions for their maintenance, which they earned by rural labour, but a certain time was set apart each day for prayer and holy meditation, and in the evening when a bell rang, they gave up work and went to the church, where they remained till nightfall. At the crowing of the cock they rose and repaired to the church till the dawn of day called them to their labour again, and thus simply and peacefully their days were passed in obedience and humility.

There existed at that time the Pelagian heresy, which had been introduced by Pelagius, a native of Wales, and which denied the existence of original sin. S. David set himself to battle against this dangerous doctrine, and by his eloquence was able to silence many heretics, and sometimes to convince them of their error.

A synod was held in Cardiganshire, to which S. David was invited, and at its close the Archbishop of Caerleon resigned his own See to the Saint of Wales, who would have refused it, but by the express commands laid upon him. But it was arranged that the See should be transferred from Caerleon to Menevia—now called S. David's—which was a quiet and retired spot, more suited to one who loved not the haunts of men.

The Saint very frequently passed over to Ireland, and many of his monks went there also from their own monastery. There is some uncertainty as to the age at which S. David died; some affirm that he lived to the age of

eighty-two years; others—but these are not so many—affirming that he was one hundred and forty-six. It is told of him that, on the last Sunday of his holy and useful life, he preached to his people with much earnestness, and also gave a special exhortation to his clergy to be faithful shepherds of the flock of Christ. Feeling his end approaching, he received the Holy Eucharist to strengthen him in his agony, and then he seemed to see in vision the Lord Jesus coming to him. With tears of joy, and outstretched hands, the holy man welcomed the heavenly guest, who, after a while, turned as if to go; then, with inexpressible love and longing, S. David cried, “Lord, take me after Thee;” and as he spoke the words his desire was given him, and his spirit was set free from earth, and entered into the glory of the eternal world.



S. Gall.

A.D. 554.

 HE parents of this Saint were of noble birth, and dwelt in the city of Arverna, near Clermont.

From his boyhood Gall wished to devote himself wholly to the service of God, and thus, when his father desired to espouse him to some well-born maiden, he escaped from home and took refuge in a monastery at Clermont, begging the Abbot to receive him as a novice.

Inquiring as to his name and parentage, the Abbot desired Gall to wait until his father could give his permission to such a step, and the youth obeyed, offering in the meanwhile many

prayers to heaven. When Gregory received the news of his son's request he said, "I had hoped to see him well married, but if he indeed desires to live to God alone, and serve Him, then may God's Will, not mine, be done."

So Gall's supplications were answered, and he received the tonsure. Soon afterward, the Bishop Quintinian came to visit the monastery, and was so pleased with the young novice that he took him under his own care, that he might himself train him for the priesthood.

Gall had unusual talent for music, and so sweet a voice, that when at his father's death he came into possession of his wealth, the King Thierri compelled him to come to Court and delight himself and the Queen with his beautiful singing. They became much attached to Gall, and the King, for a long time, refused to give any ecclesiastical preferment to him, not being willing to lose one whom he loved almost as a son.

After the death of Quintinian in 527, the

vacant bishopric was given to Gall, and, having been ordained priest, he entered Clermont amidst general rejoicings. It seems that he well fulfilled all the duties of his new office, and himself led a life of prayer. In 546, when a terrible plague was raging in the province of Arles, S. Gall instituted Mid-Lent Rogation processions in his diocese, to implore the aid of the Almighty, Who was pleased to answer the petitions offered by the good Bishop; for he did not permit the disorder to come near Clermont.

When he had attained the age of sixty-five years, twenty-seven of which he spent in the episcopal state, Gall felt that death was threatening him.

He immediately summoned his people to assist at Mass in the Cathedral Church, and with his own hand gave them for the last time the Holy Communion.

Three days afterwards, it was Sunday, and S. Gall, lying waiting for God to release him, heard the distant voices chanting in the church.

He then began himself to sing the Miserere, the Alleluia, and the Little Chapter, which being finished he exclaimed, "Farewell, my brothers," and immediately expired.

The life of this Saint and Bishop is written by his nephew, Gregory of Tours.



S. Malo.

A.D. 564.

SMACHUTUS, or, as he is more commonly called, S. Malo, was born among the mountains of Wales, and was there baptized and educated as a Christian by S. Brendan, who had come from Ireland to the monastery of Llancarvan. But when Brendan founded a religious house in Brittany, Malo accompanied him, being still a boy, whose studies were incomplete, and the place where they dwelt is now known by his name.

It is told that one day when the boys were playing about on the sea-shore S. Malo lay down weary with the fun, and presently fell

asleep, while the other children, forgetting all about him, went back to school. The tide came in rapidly as it does on that shore, and rose high, dashing against the rocks. By that time S. Brendan had discovered that his pupil was missing, and running out called to him, but in vain. Greatly distressed, he thought that the boy must have been washed away; but God's protecting care was around the future Saint, and He had permitted the sand and kelp on which Malo had stretched himself, to rise with the tide, and form itself into an island on which he reposed in perfect safety. When Brendan went down again to the shore he saw the new islet with Malo upon it, who called to him, asking him to send his Breviary that he might say his usual Office. S. Brendan placed the book on the waves, which carried it safely to his pupil.

Upon reaching a suitable age S. Malo received the habit, and became so holy and virtuous that while exciting the admiration of his brethren, some among them were moved

to envy. So they sometimes played tricks, which might result in blame being laid upon him, and once, when it was his turn to light the candles for matins, they put out every lamp in the dormitory and in the church, and even the coals in the fireplace were all dead. Malo took some of the cinders in his bosom, and went to tell the Abbot, but ere reaching him the charcoal had kindled, and taking the cinders from within his habit, he found them becoming red and glowing, and soon the candles were lighted and the extinguished lamps burning brightly as ever.

But the envy of the monks grew such that S. Brendan would not remain with them, and taking Malo in his company, he took ship and sailed towards some solitary place, where they might together serve God more peacefully; but an angel voice bade them return, and Malo was shortly after made Bishop. But though he was so holy, he was sent away from his bishopric, and forced to take refuge at Saintes, in Aquitaine, where S. Leontius wel-

comed him with great joy. S. Malo did not forget those who had used him so ungratefully, and every day at the Holy Sacrifice he used to pray that they might be reunited. His supplications were heard, and he was recalled, but journeying a second time to Saintes, to visit Leontius, some severe illness overtook him, and from its effects he died on the 15th November, 564. Many miracles were performed by Malo during his life. We often find that the holy ones of God have strange power over wild and ferocious animals, and thus it was that when a wolf had come out of the forest at nightfall, and devoured the ass, which belonged to an aged woman, and helped her to gain a livelihood, by carrying the fagots she gathered and sold, the word of S. Malo was sufficient to tame the savage beast, which afterwards bore the fagots in place of the animal it had destroyed.

The only relic of the Saint which has been preserved through the lapse of centuries is at S. Malo, near Versailles.



S. Paul of Leon.

A.D. 573.

HE father of S. Paul of Léon was a Welsh prince, who early placed his son under the instruction of S. Flint, but when about sixteen years old the youth left his master and his friends, and went over to Brittany, where he made himself an oratory and a cell in a lonely spot. In the course of time other youths were attracted to the same way of life, and thus a little community was established, over which Paul ruled as superior.

A prince named Mark lived not far away, and he besought the Saint—who was now a priest—to come and teach his people about God.

Paul agreed to do this, and was the means of much good, but after a time his longing after solitude could not be repressed, and he begged the King to let him depart, and as a gift to bestow a bell upon him.

It was usual at that time for kings, when they sat down to dine to have seven bells rung ; but though the prince had esteemed Paul very highly he was so vexed at losing him that he refused the gift. Before the holy man went to his brethren he paid a visit to his sister, who dwelt with some other pious women upon a little island, and she wept so much when he was about to leave her that he agreed to stay three days more.

When for the second time he was bidding her farewell, she begged him to pray that God would join the little island to the shore, because it was dangerous for landing.

“ Ah, my sister, thou hast asked what is beyond my strength,” said S. Paul. “ Nevertheless, we will together beseech the Lord to be gracious and to grant thy desire.”

They knelt in prayer, and as the prayer went up to heaven the sea began to retreat and leave smooth sand where once it had been water, and the other nuns came telling the tidings to the brother and sister, who were beseeching this favour of God, and they rose and went down to the sea and stepped upon the new land. Then the sister of the Saint took pebbles and strewed them by each side of the way, and lo! they grew up into tall rocks, and thus marked the road, which to the present day is known as the road of S. Paul.

Now the holy man began journeying about Brittany to convert souls, until he settled on the island of Batz, which was a little way off the coast, and here he found wild bees in the hollow of a tree, and set them in a hive, and taught the people how to get honey.

One day, when S. Paul was in the company of the good Count Wittner, who, under Childebert, was lord of the country, a fisherman brought to them a bell which he had found

on the shore ; and Paul, smiling, said, that after many years God had sent him a bell, though the prince Mark had refused him one.

At Léon the Saint built a church, and was appointed its first Bishop. We hear that Count Wittner greatly desired to see this dignity conferred upon Paul, but knowing his humility would prevent his acceptance of it he managed it as follows.

Writing a letter to the King Chilperic, he besought S. Paul to present it to him, as it was about a matter of importance, and thus the holy man hastened in all simplicity to the royal court. Breaking the seal, and perceiving what Wittner requested, the King caught a staff from the hand of a prelate who stood by, and said : "Receive the pastoral dignity to discharge thy office for the good of many souls," and called three bishops to him, that they might ordain him. S. Paul burst into tears, and implored the King to desist, but his entreaties were ineffectual, and he went

back to Léon a bishop, to the very great joy of the people.

Having erected a monastery on the Isle of Batz, the holy man retired there whenever he could rest from the duties of the episcopal office, and he lived to a very great age. His body was interred in his own cathedral church, but his relics were dispersed in the sixteenth century by the Huguenots. In art, S. Paul of Léon is usually represented with a bell, or driving a dragon into the sea, which signifies that he expelled the superstition of the Druids from Brittany.



S. Columba.

A.D. 597.

N one of the wildest districts of Donegal, many a century back, a lady of royal descent was expecting the birth of a child, who, if a son, would probably succeed to the throne of Ireland, which his ancestors had held for six hundred years.

One night, in a dream, an angel appeared to this woman, bringing her a veil covered with flowers of rarest beauty; but as she gazed, the veil was lifted by the wind and carried away over plains and mountains, so that she saw it no more. Then said the angel to her:

"Thou art about to become the mother of a son who shall lead innumerable souls to the heavenly country, and be reckoned among the prophets of God."

Soon afterwards the child was born, and was baptized Columba, and the priest who had thus made him an inheritor of the kingdom of heaven, took charge of his education as he grew older. Very early did the youth feel called to the monastic life, and devoted himself assiduously to the necessary study. But manual toil was in those days required from all who aspired to the religious habit, and Columba, though of royal birth, must, like his young companions, grind the corn for the next day's food, and other humble offices which were commanded in the monastic school where he was trained for the life he desired.

While still but a very young man, Columba founded some considerable number of monastic houses in Ireland, one of which was Derry, in his own native province, where he habitually lived and superintended the community. The

monk was also a poet, writing some of his verses in Latin, but more in his own tongue, some few of which have been preserved.

Columba loved books, which were then rare indeed, and we hear, that with his own hand he transcribed three hundred copies of the Gospels and of the Psalter. After a time, this Saint resolved to exile himself from his dearly-loved island, as a reparation for his many sins, and departed with twelve companions in an osier-boat covered with hide, that he might preach the Gospel to the heathen. The spot where he landed took the name of I. Colmkill—the islands of Columb of the Churches—but is more familiar to us as Iona. A legendary story tells that Columba really set foot first upon another islet, but finding that from it he could still see his dear Ireland, he immediately got into his boat to seek a shore from whence no glimpse of his native country could be obtained. Reaching Iona, he mounted its highest point, and as Ireland was quite invisible, there he remained and

built huts of branches, for himself and his brethren.

If Columba was sad at heart in his exile, he did not allow that sadness to interfere with the work he had undertaken, and so powerfully did he preach Christ to those around, that the wild and savage became docile as children, and the most hardened sinners were brought to shed tears of repentance. From Ireland, from all parts of Britain, from among the still-heathen Saxons, people flocked to visit the saintly Columba, who received them with such unwearied charity ; but he found time for labour with the other monks, for penance, and for prolonged prayer.

Many who came to Iona desired to remain there to follow the same rule of life, so the little community rapidly increased, and from it other monasteries were founded, all of which were subject to the rule of Columba.

But the heart of the Saint was turning to that part of Caledonia where dwelt the Picts, who were still heathens, and the last thirty

years of his life were spent in missions to them. On one of these journeys on the banks of Loch Ness, he said to his companions :

“Let us make haste and meet the angels, who have come down from heaven, and who wait for us by a Pict, who, according to the natural law, has done well all his life to extreme old age. We must baptize him before he dies.”

Himself then old, Columba hastened on, outstripping the pace of his disciples, and reached a secluded valley, where he found an aged man who listened to his teaching, received baptism, and immediately resigned his soul into God’s keeping.

In the eastern part of Caledonia there was a chieftain who had refused the missionaries permission to settle there; but when his son became ill he hastened to them, beseeching their prayers for his apparently dying child, and offering them land for the foundation of a religious house. At the prayer of Columba the boy’s life was spared, and when the Saint

had settled his disciples in their new home, he bade them farewell. One of them, named Drostan, was so grieved at the separation from his master, that he wept violently, whereupon Columba said: "Let us call this place the Monastery of Tears." And the great abbey retained that name during the thousand years which it stood upon that spot.

Towards the latter part of his life Columba found it necessary to make several journeys to Ireland, for the visitation of monasteries he had founded there; but though he laboured hard in serving God, and bore many a fatigue in helping others for His sake, such was his humility that he felt he had done nothing worthy of so dear a Master. As he noticed that his life was drawing to a close, the Saint increased his mortifications and austeries. One day, he saw a poor old woman gathering herbs, and even nettles for her food, whereupon he was filled with self-reproach because he was better fed than she. So the old Saint went home to his monastery, and gave orders that he also

should be served with wild herbs and nettles, and he was much displeased when the monk Diarmid threw a little butter into the caldron wherein this miserable food was prepared.

It seemed as if it was God's Will to make known the future glory of Columba, by permitting a heavenly radiance to surround him in his time of prayer; his monks could see his cell brilliantly lighted during the night while their master sang God's praises, and it was a light which dazzled them with its exceeding brightness.

One winter's night, a young man remained alone in the church while the others were resting, and all at once he saw the holy old Abbot enter, and a golden radiance seemed to come from the roof and light up the entire building. These signs were observed for several years before the death of Columba; but at length, one day he was found gazing heavenward with a wonderful joy glowing upon every feature, which presently gave place to a look of deep sadness. Two of his monks knelt at his feet,

and implored him to say what had been revealed to him, and then he told that it was thirty years that day since he had landed in Caledonia, and that he had always prayed that his time on earth might end with those thirty years. But then he added, "When you saw me so joyous, I was already able to see the angels coming for me, but suddenly they stopped upon that rock beyond our island, as if they could not approach me; and thus I am sad, for I know that the prayers of many are obtaining from God that I should still dwell in the body."

Four years more passed by, and now the holy man again spoke of his death. It was the end of May, and he desired to take leave of some of the monks who were at work in the fields on the western side of Iona; but as he could not walk by reason of weakness, he was drawn in a cart by some oxen. When he reached the desired spot he told his brethren that he had hoped to die during the festival of Easter, but had prayed to linger until it

was over, lest his departure might change that time of rejoicing into sadness. Then he blessed the island and its inhabitants, and returned to the monastery; but on the following Saturday he told Diarmid that it was his last day on earth. We hear, that as he spoke, an old white horse which had daily carried milk to the monastery came and put its head on his shoulder, as if bidding his master farewell.

“Leave him with me,” said Columba, when Diarmid would have driven the faithful creature away; “God hath revealed to this poor animal what He has hidden from thee; he loves me, so let him weep for my departure.”

After this, the Saint went to his cell, and set himself to the work he was then engaged upon, in transcribing the Psalter. At the thirty-third Psalm he stayed his hand, saying, “Baithru will write the rest.” Then he went to Office, after which he sat down on the stone floor of his cell, and entrusted one of his disciples with a last message of love to the community. As the bell rang for matins, Columba

hastened, first of them all, to the church, and knelt down before the altar, and there—when the lights were brought—the monks found him dying. Once he opened his eyes, full of a most joyful peace; once, too, he tried to raise his hand in blessing, but even as he made the attempt he drew his last breath, and fell as it were asleep—but it was the sleep which knows no earthly waking, for Columba was now at rest for ever.



S. Mungo.

A.D. 601.

N the dusky light of evening, a young mother sat by the sea-shore, many centuries ago, rocking her infant to sleep in her arms.

She was very sad, for her father had driven her from his home ; but God watched over her and was about to send His servant, the holy Servan, to comfort and assist her. As he knelt in his cell at prayer it seemed to him that he heard angels singing, and when his Office was finished he hastened where those heavenly voices led him, and there found the desolate mother stilling the cries of her infant

son. Taking her to his own cell for shelter, S. Servan taught her the Christian faith, and baptized both her and her child, calling her little one Kentigern, which name was changed afterwards to Mungo. The child became the pupil of the old man, and was educated by him with great care.

Many little stories of his early days have been preserved to us.

We hear that S. Servan had a tame red-breast which would eat out of his hand, and the boys who were Mungo's companions killed this bird, and charged him with having done the deed. Poor Mungo was in great distress, and with fast-falling tears took the dead red-breast in his hand, and praying to God made the sign of the Cross over it; nor was his prayer unanswered, for when the old man returned from the church, his little favourite hopped to meet him with its usual joyous chirp.

These boys had a great jealousy of Mungo, because he was so much beloved by his master, and it showed itself in many ways. They

were accustomed to take it in turns for a week, to see that the fire was not extinguished during the night—for in those times the lighting of it was difficult. When Mungo's week for performing this duty came, the boys put out the fire in order to bring him into disgrace; but calling upon the Blessed Trinity he blew on the dead cinders, and a flame leaped up from which he was able to light the candles in the church.

The unkindness of his fellows became so hard to bear, that at last Mungo ran away and reached the farther bank of the river, where Servan from the other side perceived him.

"Alas, my son, do not desert my white hairs," he cried.

Mungo was moved to tears, but called back: "My father, it is the Will of God that I go."

Then the holy man blessed him from across the river; nor did they ever meet in this world again.

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Mungo now made his abode in the cave of a rock near Glasgow, where as time went on, many people sought instruction from him, and were converted by his teaching. He was then consecrated a bishop by an Irish prelate, but he still dwelt in his rocky cell, where he had but a stone for his pillow, and eat no other food than bread, milk, or cheese.

During the time when the throne of Strathclyde was usurped by Morken, S. Mungo had to take refuge in Wales, with S. David, but when Roderick regained his crown, the holy bishop returned to Scotland, and established himself once more at Glasgow with others who followed the rule of life he laid down for them. His fame drew the saintly Columba to assist him, and they passed some days in conversing of spiritual things, exchanging their pastoral staves when they parted as a token of mutual affection. S. Mungo lived to a very great age, and at last became so weak that his lower jaw had to be supported by a linen band fastened round his head. At

length he died quietly, as he was being lifted out of a warm bath. In art the Saint of Glasgow is often represented with a fish and ring. This is in allusion to an anecdote given of the help he afforded to the wife of King Roderick, who having lost a ring came weeping to Mungo because her husband's anger was kindled against her, and he had declared that she should die if it was not found. Although she had been weak and sinful, the Saint felt moved to pity her in her great distress, and he prayed to God to help her. After that prayer had been offered, the ring was found inside a salmon caught in the river Clyde, and S. Mungo sent it to the Queen, who showing it to her husband, was pardoned.



S. Gregory the Great, Pope.

A.D. 600, OR 604.

GHE father of the illustrious Saint Gregory was a wealthy Roman senator named Gordianus, whose wife Sylvia being a very good and holy woman, devoted herself to the careful training of her son's earliest years. But it was not at first that Gregory resolved to serve God in religion; the world allured him, he had early been called to the important post of *praetor* of Rome, and he had now the esteem of many hearts. However, God had need of him elsewhere, and at length Gregory broke through every tie and hindrance, and relinquish-

ing his wealth endowed six new monasteries in Sicily, and established a seventh on the Cælian hill at Rome, in which the Benedictine rule was followed, and where he himself became a monk. Now, he who had been the much-flattered young patrician, might be seen clothed in a coarse habit serving the beggars who crowded round the gate, or eating the meal of pulse, which his mother sent to him in a porringer of silver, the only remnant of former luxury. Being a luxury, the silver porringer was soon given away as an alms to a shipwrecked sailor who was in extreme need.

But S. Gregory was not able to maintain so severe a life as he had desired. Continual work and study taxed his brain greatly, and his constitution required more nourishing food, and so he fell into ill-health, which troubled him more or less during the remainder of his life

In the year 577, Pope Benedict I. drew Gregory from the cloister to be made one of the cardinal deacons, and Pelagius II. after-

wards sent him as embassy to the Imperial Court at Constantinople, nor did he return to Rome for some six years. Happy was he when he regained his own beloved monastery, where he was speedily elected abbot, and enjoyed the love and confidence of all his brethren.

It was during this period of his life that S. Gregory saw in the market-place the fair Saxon children who were said to come from the land of the Angles. "Not Angles, but Angels," he said; and with a heart full of longing to save souls, Gregory hastened to the Pope, entreating him to send missionaries to the land where the pagans sold these children for slaves.

The Pontiff agreed, and Gregory was to start on the mission; but the people of Rome heard what he purposed, and surrounding the Pope, induced him to reconsider his decision, and recall the Saint who was already three days on his journey. So Gregory was brought back to his monastery; but there he could still

pray for the land in which he had longed to toil ; and when he was raised to the Pontificate he remembered the Angles, and rested not until missionaries were sent to tell them of the Faith of Christ.

Very reluctantly did Gregory become the successor of Pelagius II. ; he appealed against it to the Emperor, and even disguised himself and fled from Rome, wandering for three days in the thickets of a wood ; yet there he was found and led back to the city to reign over the Church, because such was the Will of God.

Writing of this changed life to the sister of the Emperor, he said : “ I have lost the profound joys of repose. I seem to have been elevated in external things, but in spiritual I have fallen.”

To another friend he said : “ I weep when I recall the peaceful shore I have left, and sigh in perceiving afar what I now cannot attain.”

But, though thus grieving to be taken from a life of seclusion, S. Gregory fulfilled ad-

mirably the duties belonging to the state he would never have chosen ; nor was it an easy matter in those troublous times, when so many complaints were maintained against the Church.

One of the great works of S. Gregory was the giving its definite form to the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass, and fixing the true doctrine respecting the veneration of images. He also collected the ancient Church melodies, and harmonised them for use during the Divine worship.

When he was so ill that he could not leave his bed, he would call the boys round him and teach them singing as he had done in health, though for nearly two years he was suffering so much pain that he could not often rise to celebrate Mass even upon great festivals.

Many, and very valuable, are the books written by S. Gregory, and yet with such unusual attainments and talents, he was perfectly humble, and always subscribed himself, "Servant of the servants of God," which all

succeeding Popes have copied to this day. At length his useful and holy life came to a close, and he was buried in the Basilica of S. Peter's; his pallium, reliquary, and girdle being preserved as most precious relics. In the year 826, the body of this great Saint was brought to the monastery of S. Medard, in France, and the head deposited in the abbey at Sens. In art S. Gregory the Great is represented as a Pope with a dove hovering at his ear.

Painters, also, have chosen the subject of his Mass, when the Saint prayed that the eyes of the woman might be opened, so that she should believe Christ really present in the Sacred Host; which, at his supplication, was visibly changed from the appearance of bread to that of Christ suffering in His Passion.



S. Augustine, Archbishop.

A.D. 604.

N the year 596 a small band of monks started from Rome, by order of the great S. Gregory, their mission being to preach the Gospel in Britain. At their head was Augustine, who had been Abbot of the monastery of S. Andrew, and when their difficulties in passing through France became almost insurmountable, it was he whom the others besought to return to Rome for permission to abandon the project.

But S. Gregory saw ground for hope rather than fear in their alarm and discouragement; the very difficulties which beset them seemed to

him but so many proofs that they were engaged upon God's work, and thus he sent by Augustine this message: "Go forward in God's Name, knowing the glory of the everlasting reward which shall follow this great labour. Almighty God protect you by His grace, and grant me to see the fruit of your labour in His eternal kingdom."

So they went their way, and landed in the Isle of Thanet in Kent, where for a long time after, a rock was shown which bore the impress of the Saint's footmark.

There they waited until they heard how Ethelbert, King of Kent, had received the tidings of their arrival. Though himself a heathen, Ethelbert had married a Christian wife—Bertha, the daughter of the King of France.

When she came to her new home in pagan England, she brought with her the holy priest Lindard as chaplain, and a little building was set apart for a church, which had been used by some of the Christians before

the invaders had driven them away. So when King Ethelbert heard of the landing of the missionaries from Rome, he was not angry, because his wife loved the same faith ; all that he expected from them was that they should on no account come to Canterbury, and that his first meeting with them should be in the open air for fear that they should use any charms or spells.

After some delay the monks were allowed an audience in the Isle of Thanet, and as the king awaited them seated under a tree with his soldiers round him, S. Augustine and his followers approached bearing a silver Cross and a banner, chanting some litany as they walked.

They had brought an interpreter from France, and through him they told Ethelbert the good tidings they were bringing to his land ; but he answered that he could not himself assent to new doctrines, though they should remain free from molestation, and no one should hinder them turning such as pleased to the Christian religion.

Then the missionaries were allowed to come to Canterbury, and as they entered the city they sang a litany of S. Gregory's own composition, which had been used during the plague which had been raging in Rome.

Having a house in Canterbury assigned to their use, S. Augustine began preaching the Faith of Christ ; and seeing their holy lives, and hearing of the wonders they accomplished by God's grace, Ethelbert approved and encouraged the monks more openly, and let them worship in the Church of S. Martin, which belonged to Queen Bertha.

S. Augustine went to France to be consecrated a Bishop, but he soon came back to his work in England, and great was their success ; and on Whitsun Day in the year 579, Ethelbert was baptized, to the joy of his Christian wife, who had long prayed for his conversion.

At the close of that year of missionary labour the good news went to Pope Gregory that ninety thousand Saxons had been baptized.

S. Augustine consecrated the cathedral Church of Canterbury, and dedicated it to Our Lord ; and then he built another church called the Abbey of S. Augustine, but before its consecration he died, some two months after Pope Gregory had entered into his rest.

Almost can we picture the scene that fair morning when Ethelbert sat under the tree and looked upon the little company advancing towards him with no weapon of conquest save the silver Cross which was more powerful than sword of steel. Much do we owe those who came thus to convert a heathen land to the knowledge and love of Christ. Thinking of their work, their courage, their prayer, surely we shall pray that the Faith Augustine brought may once again become the Faith of England, that the Cross of Christ may triumph over its enemies, and be once more the sign dearest to English hearts.



S. Oswald, King and Martyr.

A.D. 642.

OSWALD was the son of Ethelfrid the Ravager, and upon his death, being then but a child, he had to seek refuge among the Scots. It was thus he came in contact with Christians, for the labours of Columba had converted the people of Caledonia, and both Oswald and his companions were baptized during that long period of exile. After the overthrow of the Deirian dynasty Oswald gathered together a small company against the Briton Cadwallon, and the unequally matched armies met near the great wall which the Emperor Severus had erected

to keep out the Picts. Oswald occupied a height, afterwards called "Heaven's Field," from whence his little force could defy the soldiers of Cadwallon; and upon that height he raised a wooden Cross, the night before the great contest, and prayed God to give them victory over their enemies. Afterwards Oswald lay down to rest, and in a dream saw a vision of S. Columba, who, shining with heavenly radiance, stretched his robe over the little army as if in protection, and said to Oswald, "I have obtained for thee from God the victory over thine enemies, and the death of tyrants; thou shalt conquer and reign."

Awaking, he comforted his followers with relating this vision, and those who were not Christians promised to receive baptism if he proved conqueror. Early on the following day, the battle took place, and in it the powerful Cadwallon was slain, the Britons were completely routed by their apparently feeble opponents, and Oswald became king of the whole of Northumbria. He was the sixth of those

who bore the title of *Bretwalda*. The first desire of Oswald's heart was to bring among his people the religion he had learned to love in exile, and he sent to the monasteries founded by Columba for missionaries. It was then that Aidan came to found the Church in Northumbria, and many accompanied him and began to preach and baptize. King Oswald did not content himself with aiding the spread of Christianity, but he began to practise a life of great perfection, caring more for heavenly things than for aught else, passing entire nights in prayer, and giving alms to the poor, the sick, and all those strangers who came to Bishop Aidan for teaching. He also patiently translated Aidan's sermons into the language of the Anglo-Saxons, for the Bishop as yet spoke it very imperfectly. Oswald sought for his wife the daughter of the King of the West Saxons, who had been converted to Christianity, and one son was born to them. But the life of this good king was destined to be very brief. Penda was still living, although

advanced in age ; and placing himself at the head of an army, began a war with Oswald, chiefly because he had embraced Christianity, and after two years a great battle was fought at Maserfeld, in which this much-loved King fell, being then but thirty-eight years of age. His last thought was for his people. " My God, save their souls," he cried, as he felt the lances and arrows of the enemies, who had gathered round him, and then he died ; but that cry long remained imprinted on the hearts of the Saxon people.

Not satisfied that Oswald was dead, Penda caused his head and also his hands to be cut off and fixed upon stakes, that his followers might be intimidated ; but afterwards the head was rescued and conveyed to the monastery of Lindisfarne, while the hands were placed in a chapel in the fortress of Bamborough.

Strange it seems that Oswald is one of those Saints whom we may almost term *forgotten*, so little is he known among us ; yet he brought truth to his people ; he spent his

life in spreading the knowledge and love of God among them, and died at last, praying for the salvation of their souls. Thus has it with truth been said of the holy Oswald: "He was a soldier and a missionary, a king, and also a martyr."



S. Chad, Bishop.

A.D. 673.

IN olden days there were four brothers whom God had called to serve Him as His priests, and who had alike been trained by the holy Scottish monk, Aidan, in his monastery at Lindisfarne. One of these brethren was S. Chad, who, in the year 666, was made Bishop of York, until there arose some question concerning his right to the See, which was decided at last in favour of S. Wilfrid by Theodore, Archbishop of Canterbury.

S. Chad was in nowise displeased by this decision, for he had never desired power or

greatness, and when he heard of it he said : “ If I have not duly received the episcopate, I willingly resign it; for, indeed, I never deemed myself worthy of it, though from obedience I consented.”

While busied with his duties as Bishop over that diocese, he had used the utmost diligence in accomplishing them, and had taken special care to visit the poorest and humblest of his flock, preaching the Gospel to them.

When taking one of his many journeys, the holy Bishop never would go in any state, but on foot, like the Apostles of old.

Though removed from York, S. Chad was appointed to the Bishopric of Lichfield, at which place he gathered together some seven or eight monks as companions in serving God, and all the time he could spare from his episcopal duties was passed among them in study and in prayer.

Years rolled by, and one day a monk heard the sweetest music in the oratory of S. Chad —so sweet that he knew it must be the music

of heaven, not of earthly voices. "Father," he said, hastening to the Saint, "tell me, I pray, what is this music I hear coming like a song of joy from heaven, and again returning thither?"

S. Chad said to him: "I command you in God's Name, that if you perceived the heavenly angels or heard this melody, you tell it not until after I am gone. They are the spirits of the angels who have been sent to summon me from this world; and they have given me the blessed promise that upon their return after seven days they will carry me with them."

Almost immediately after thus speaking, the holy Bishop was seized with sudden weakness of body, which gradually increased until the seventh day, when, having received the Holy Viaticum, his soul passed to heaven, conducted there amidst the music of the angels who had come to bear him to his eternal home.

After the death of S. Chad many miracles were performed at his grave. A maniac,

having contrived to escape from his keepers, concealed himself all night upon the tomb of the Saint, and became perfectly restored to his right mind, and many who were sick and afflicted with diseases were also cured there. When, about the year 700, his remains were removed to the cathedral of Lichfield, they were enclosed in a rich shrine, and so many pilgrims came to it, that from an insignificant almost unknown village, it became a place of some importance.

Over the door of the cathedral there is a figure of S. Chad, throned as a Bishop ; but all other vestiges of him perished during the Reformation or at the time of the civil wars. His body being thus secretly removed by Catholics, was for a long time concealed in the house of a family who retained the Faith through all persecution, but now is publicly exposed for veneration in a shrine prepared for the sacred relics in the cathedral at Birmingham.

To the east of the town of Lichfield there

is a well of very pure cold water, which bears the name of S. Chad, and a stone in the bottom of it is pointed out as that whereon the Saint was wont to stand and pray.



S. Hilda, Abbess.

A.D. 679.

SOMEWHERE about the year 645 a lady of Northumbria founded a religious house at Hartlepool, receiving the veil from the hands of the holy Bishop Aidan. After a few years she retired to serve God in greater solitude, and Hilda, the granddaughter of Edwin, the first Christian King of Northumbria, was chosen to fill her place.

Hilda had been born in exile among the West Saxons, when her mother died a violent death, but she returned with her father in 617. For thirty-three years she had lived a holy life in her family, when God called her to re-

sign all for Him ; and desiring to obey that voice in her heart, which spoke of sacrifice, she left her home, intending to go to France, and there to receive the religious habit, but she was recalled to Northumbria by Aidan. Having spent a year with some companions under his guidance, Hilda was made Superior of the convent at Hartlepool, where she at once began to introduce order, which had been somewhat neglected. When nine years had passed, a gift of land was granted her by King Oswy, for the purpose of founding another religious house at "Streanestutch," or Whitby, as we now call it. Well did Hilda govern both communities, for she had great judgment and discretion, and a love of monastic regularity ; we find that not only S. Aidan and other religious sought frequent counsel of this wise abbess, but kings and princes would take long journeys on purpose to consult her in any matter of difficulty.

Though thus finding favour with the rich and great, the poor and the unlearned also

loved Hilda, who was the means of conversion to many a sinful soul. At that time, and especially in Celtic countries, it was not unusual for a monastery to be connected with a convent, being ruled by the same abbess, and thus was it at Whitby.

Deeply were the daughters of S. Hilda attached to her; but as deep was the reverence and devotion of the monks, subject to her government, and many men of extraordinary sanctity issued from among them, such as S. John of Beverley, and S. Wilfrid.

In 664 a council was convoked by Oswy to decide several important questions, the chief of which was as to whether Easter should be observed somewhat before the celebration of the festival by the Roman Church, as had been long the practice of the Celtic Church. The Abbess Hilda was fifty years old when this gathering took place at Whitby; and she was of those who clung to the Celtic tradition; but King Oswy, influenced by S. Wilfrid, decided for the Roman use, and a good deal of strife en-

sued, which did not terminate until after Hilda's death.

She had suffered much during the last few years of her life, but had in nowise left her duties unfulfilled; and her last act was to summon her monks and nuns around her; when, having entreated them to dwell in charity and peace and to preserve the same towards all men, she passed from among them to her eternal rest.



S. Ceadmon.

A.D. 680.

WE hear much of the holy men who, in olden times, came forth strong to work for God, from the monastery guided by the famous Abbess Hilda; but none, however great and learned, have surpassed in sanctity the humble Ceadmon, who was but an old cowherd dwelling on the land belonging to the community. Already far advanced in years, he had spent his life in the humblest occupations; nor had he ever learned enough of music to sing, as was the custom of both poor and rich when they gathered at some social feast.

If it happened at such times that they told him it was now his turn, Ceadmon would rise and go home, with the excuse of having something to do. One evening, when he had thus retired from some humble gathering, he went to his shed and fell asleep among the cattle.

During that slumber it seemed to him that a voice called him, saying, "Ceadmon, sing me something." Then he heard his own reply: "I cannot sing, and therefore I am here among my cattle." But the voice still commanded him to sing; and it appeared to Ceadmon that he sang verses, such as he had never known before, in praise of the glory and power of God.

When Hilda heard this story she sent for the old cowherd, and put many questions to him in the presence of all the most learned men she could assemble together; and he was made to tell of the vision and repeat his songs. Having done this, several passages of Scripture were made plain to him, that he might

put them into verse, which he did most excellently, and all declared it could be nothing less than God's gift bestowed miraculously on him.

So S. Hilda took the old man among the monks under her rule, and set him to translate the Bible into Anglo-Saxon ; and, as he pursued his task, he transformed the sacred words into such beautiful songs that all who heard them marvelled at their sweetness.

Not only was Ceadmon raised to the dignity of a true poet ; he was a true monk, and edified all his brethren by his simple piety of heart. Humbly he prized the grace bestowed on him from Heaven ; faithfully and tranquilly he served God, and many a worldly person was moved by him to turn to higher and better pursuits.

At the beginning of his last illness, S. Ceadmon begged to have his bed in that part of the infirmary which was devoted to those who were dying ; and, though smiling and cheerful, he begged to receive Viaticum.

According to the custom of those early times, he was about to administer Communion to himself, when he paused, and, holding the Holy Eucharist in his hands, asked those who were gathered round his bed whether he had given them cause of offence, or, whether any one had a complaint to make. Each one answered "No;" for Ceadmon had lived too purely and sweetly to be an occasion of offence to any one. "Then," said he, "I too am at peace with all God's servants;" and, receiving the adorable Sacrament, he remained motionless until, just as they were about to ring the bell for Matins, he made the sign of the Cross, and, turning his head on his pillow, passed away as if in sleep, to awake in heaven.



S. Aidan, Bishop.

A.D. 651.

HE name of Aidan is connected with those early days when earnest men were needed to spread the Faith of Christ in Northumbria, and win the obdurate hearts of its uncivilised people for God.

Among the monks of Iona, who had been gathered there by the great Columba, there was one of very gentle spirit, who gained power over these rude men when others had been unsuccessful. One missionary, named Cormac, had returned to Iona declaring them untamable savages; and such a report was discouraging to the monks, who longed

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most earnestly for the conversion of souls. They assembled together to deliberate on the best course to pursue; and then it was that Aidan rose and, addressing Corman, said, "It seems to me, brother, you have been hard on these poor creatures; you have not offered them—according to apostolic counsel—first the milk of gentle doctrine, to bring them by degrees to the true understanding and practice of the more advanced precepts."

As he spoke, every eye turned on Aidan, and they agreed in thinking that he was the man best fitted for the missionary work; so he received consecration, and with several brethren departed to Northumbria.

King Oswald left to Aidan the choice of where he should place his monastery, and he preferred the poor barren island of Lindisfarne for the erection of a Christian church. An island—but only during a part of each day, for at low-tide travellers could come to it from the neighbouring shores across the sands, though many lives were lost at different times

in the attempt. The good Bishop began his work with indefatigable zeal: on foot he traversed the kingdoms belonging to Oswald, baptizing and instructing the ignorant, and encouraging those to persevere who had already received the faith.

The Venerable Bede tells us that “Aidan was a pontiff, inspired with a passionate love of goodness, but at the same time full of a surpassing gentleness and moderation.” It was this gentle spirit and the example of his own life which won the admiration of the rude Saxons; kings and nobles bestowed liberal gifts of lands upon the Church, and gave great alms to him, which he distributed at once among the poor and needy, being content himself with Lindisfarne.

S. Aidan took a special interest in the education of children, and collected twelve youths, whom he prepared for the priesthood.

Most of the large gifts bestowed on him were devoted to the emancipation of slaves, for in those days children were sold as if they

were but animals. Though Aidan made all his journeys on foot, it was the King's desire that he should have one horse for use in any special need, and therefore he presented him with the best he had. The holy Bishop did not refuse the gift; but one day, when riding, a beggar asked alms, and, having nothing with him, he dismounted and presented the horse to the mendicant.

The King heard of this, and seeking Aidan exclaimed, "Good Bishop, why did you give my horse to that beggar?"

"What is this you ask, O King?" was the reply. "A horse, which is the son of a mare, is it more precious than the man who is a son of God?"

They were just passing into dinner, and the King did not immediately reply, but after a few moments' thought he knelt at the feet of S. Aidan imploring his pardon, saying, "No more shall I regret anything of mine that is given away to the children of God." As they partook of the meal, the young King was bright

and joyous, but tears were falling from Aidan's eyes ; and when one of his pupils asked the cause, speaking in the Celtic tongue, which would not be understood by those present, the Bishop replied, "I weep because I know that this young King cannot live long, for never have I seen one so humble ; this turbulent people is not worthy of so gentle a prince." Nor was this fear groundless, for soon afterwards Oswin was put to death ; and twelve days afterwards the holy Bishop fell sick during one of his journeys, and he died in a small tent, hastily put up for a shelter at the back of the church he had first built.

The body of S. Aidan was interred in his monastic church of Lindisfarne.



S. Bede.

A.D. 734.

BEDE, called "The Venerable," was born about the year 672, near the place where the monastery of Wearmouth was soon after founded, to which in his seventh year he was sent for education. After a time, Bede passed to Jarrow, where at the age of nineteen years he was admitted to deacon's orders, for, though young, he was distinguished even then both for his piety and learning. At the age of thirty he was ordained to the priesthood by S. John of Beverley; and from that time the life of S. Bede passed quietly in prayer and study, within the walls of his monastery.

But occasionally the holy man made brief visits to other monasteries, especially to York; returning again to the composition of his numerous books; and he had no one to give him assistance until his last illness.

Albinus, Abbot of S. Augustin's, Canterbury, suggested to S. Bede his great work of "Ecclesiastical History," discovering for him all that had been done in Kent and the surrounding counties by the first missionaries, and, with the permission of the Pope, obtaining for him, from Rome, documents relating to the Mission in England.

Some of Bede's chief friends were the monks of Lindisfarne, among whom he begged to have his name enrolled, so that after death his soul might be remembered in their prayers and Masses.

In 734 he declined going to York, on account of failing health; and the fortnight before Easter was troubled by great weakness and difficulty of breathing. Thus he continued suffering, but always happy and con-

tent, sleeping little, and employing his days and nights in prayer and praise. During this time he was engaged in translating the Gospel of S. John; but on the Tuesday before Ascension Day he grew worse, and said to the brother who wrote at his dictation, "Be quick, for I shall not last much longer." On the next day, when again urging speed, one of them present said, "Dear master, there is still one chapter wanting; will it trouble you if I ask a few questions?" "It is no trouble," he answered. "Take your pen and write fast." Some hours later he called for the priests of the monastery; and to each one he spoke in turn, begging them to pray for his soul, which caused them to weep bitterly. "Do not weep," said the Saint; "it is time for me to return to Him Who formed me out of nothing. I desire to be dissolved, and to be with Christ."

At evening-time the young writer said, "There is one sentence, dear master, not written;" but soon after he added, "It is finished!" "Well said," exclaimed S. Bede.

“Well said—it is finished. Raise my old head in your arms, that I may look once more at the holy place where I was wont to pray, that, sitting up in my bed, I may call on my Father.” Thus he passed away, as he uttered the words, “Glory be to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Ghost;” and those who stood by thought that never could death come more sweetly or more peacefully.

Many pilgrims journeyed to Jarrow to visit the tomb of Bede ; but in the eleventh century his relics were stolen and conveyed to Durham, where they were venerated by the faithful until Henry VIII. destroyed the shrine.

There are several legendary stories as to how the name of “Venerable” was bestowed upon the Saint. One tells that after his death a Latin inscription was carved on his monument ; but while it was yet unfinished, the monk, whose task it was, fell asleep, and on awaking found that the line had been completed by angel hands, and ran thus :

“Hac jacent in fossa Bedæ Venerabilis ossa.”

Another story tells that, being blind in his old age, the holy man was walking with one of his scholars, when, arriving at an open space, he began to preach to the people who were thronging round him. So eloquent was his discourse that, as he uttered the last words, the stones upon which his feet rested cried out, "Amen, Venerable Bede."



S. Swithin.

A.D. 862.

THE name of this Saint is chiefly connected in our minds with the popular notion, that if it rains on the festival of his translation, it will rain daily for six weeks. Many stories are given of the origin of this saying, none of which have a very substantial foundation; the most trustworthy account being that the holy Bishop had desired in his humility that his body might lie in the churchyard where the feet of all who passed by should tread over it. For one hundred years it was so, and then the reliquies were translated by S. Ethelwold, Bishop

of Winchester, to a more honourable resting-place within the church. This being, however, contrary to the wish of the Saint, the rain began to fall as soon the grave was opened, and continued to descend with such violence for forty days, that the translation could not be effected until the expiration of that time.

Thus runs the legendary story; but there are many facts known of S. Swithin's life which prove his eminent holiness.

He was a native of Wessex, and at an early age was placed for education in the monastery of Winchester, and in due course ordained priest by Bishop Helmestan.

The learning and piety of Swithin was the occasion of his being chosen as a spiritual director by King Egbert, and his name is found in an ancient charter granted to the monastery of Croyland, as "priest of Egbert."

To S. Swithin was committed the education of the young Prince Ethelwolf, who became a monk at Winchester, though upon the death

of his father he obtained a dispensation from his vows.

After Helmestan's decease Swithin was consecrated Archbishop of Canterbury, and while zealous in the discharge of his episcopal duties he in nowise neglected the more ordinary offices of preaching to and instructing his people.

When Swithin went on journeys to different churches, he chose to travel on foot, attended by a few priests, and when a church had to be dedicated, his custom was to go to it barefoot. He gave himself but little time for sleep, and was most rigorous as regards his food, scarcely taking enough to sustain nature.

The King greatly prized the company of the good Archbishop who exerted over him the best influence, and gave him many wise counsels regarding the government of his kingdom.

S. Swithin was a great benefactor to the city of Winchester, but he lived to see it

plundered and devastated at the time of the Danish invasion in 860.

In the year 862 he died upon the 2nd July, though the Church celebrates his festival upon the 15th day of the month, it being the date of his translation.

The remains of S. Swithin lie east of the choir in the presbytery of Winchester cathedral, but one of his arms was kept in the Abbey of Peterborough.



S. Willibrord, Abp. of Winchester.

A.D. 739.

EHERE was in olden times a celebrated monastery in Connaught, and to it a young Northumbrian, of noble birth, made his way about the year 690, for the purpose of retirement and study. During his sojourn there a severe illness attacked him, and on his recovery he made a vow that henceforth he would devote himself to the service of God instead of returning to his own country.

Like many others of the brethren, this young Egbert was deeply moved by the condition of the tribes in Northern Germany, and upon the

Frisian coast, and a small company in which he was included made preparation to take the voyage; but on the eve of their departure a violent storm destroyed the vessel which was to have conveyed them.

In a vision Egbert was bidden to remain to do God's Will in Ireland, whereupon he began to think who among his own countrymen could carry out the project he must himself give up. His choice fell upon one named Willibrord, who had been for some years under his own direction, and previously had commenced his education in the monastery of Ripon. The father of Willibrord had been inspired by God to leave wife and home, and children, and build for himself an Oratory, in honour of S. Andrew, among the flats of Holderness, and thus in early childhood his son had been placed in a religious house for training. So now, with twelve companions, we find Willibrord starting for Friesland, where he was welcomed by Pepin of Herstal, who insisted on sending him to Rome to be ordained Bishop by Pope

Sergius. This ordination took place in the year 696, and his seat as Archbishop was fixed at Utrecht. There Willibrord was successful in converting many people, and he built several churches and monasteries, which he filled with some of his monks from Ireland.

The zealous Archbishop next resolved to plant the Christian faith in Denmark, but his efforts in that land fell far short of his desires, and the only result was, that he found thirty boys willing to return with him to Utrecht for education, that they might afterwards become missionaries in Denmark. On the homeward passage the vessel was driven for shelter on the shores of Heligoland, then dedicated to Forseti, or the "god of judgments," and so sacred a spot was it considered, that no one might touch any animal living there, nor even drink of the waters of the well, except in perfect silence.

But the Archbishop killed several of the sacred cattle to provide food for the crew, and

administered the sacrament of baptism to three of his companions at the well.

The natives expected that some fearful judgment must overtake the offender, but as nothing happened, they complained to their chief, who summoned Willibrord before him, and ordered that a victim should be chosen by lot and sacrificed to appease the god. This sentence was executed, but neither the Archbishop nor any of his clergy were injured, and Willibrord did not fear to speak out and tell them that their idol was no god, for one God alone existed, Who made both heaven and earth and all created things. Radbad was surprised at his courage, and sent him with an escort on his journey, during which he visited the island of Walcheren and established several churches. During his stay there, he found an idol, and throwing it down chopped it to pieces. The priest was so furious that he struck S. Willibrord on the head with his sword, but as it was done with the flat part of the blade, the Saint remained unhurt.

In the year 720 S. Boniface joined Willibrord, and spent some time labouring for souls in Friesland before he passed on to Germany.

One of the miracles recorded is this. During one of the Saint's journeys he came to a place where there was no good water, and as he and his companions were parched with thirst he bade them dig a hole, which was immediately filled with clear refreshing water.

S. Willibrord died upon the 7th November, in the year 739, and his remains were interred in the monastery of Echternach. Every year, on the Tuesday in Whitsun-week, a pilgrimage is made to his shrine.

In art S. Willibrord is represented as an Archbishop holding the church of Utrecht in his hand. Sometimes he has at his feet the fountain which sprang up at his bidding, as we have related.



S. Wulfram.

A.D. 741.

WHE birthplace of Wulfram was some three leagues distant from Fontainebleau, and his family were noble and rich. His father was greatly honoured on account of his services in the wars, and while constantly engaged in the camp, he seems to have taken care that Wulfram received a suitable education.

Though greatly loving solitude and quiet study, God called His servant to the court of Clothaire III., until S. Lambert's death left the See of Sens vacant, when he was elected to fill it. But after occupying that position some two

years and a half, Wulfram had himself freed from the charge, and after a time of preparation in the Abbey of Fontenelle, he undertook a mission to Friesland.

It was in the year 700 that he sailed from Candebec. Planting the crucifix on the bow of the ship, he sprinkled holy water, and began to offer the Holy Sacrifice, but as the deacon wiped the paten, it slipped through his fingers, and falling into the sea, was lost.

He cried out in dismay, but Wulfram bade him lean over the other side of the vessel and thrust his hand into the water, and obeying, he brought up the paten, which was the only one they had with them.

Arriving in Friesland, Wulfram began to preach with great courage, and Radbad, the King, listened, and also permitted more Christian missionaries to settle in the land. But Wulfram saw with horror how the worship of false gods prevailed over aught else, and how terrible were the sacrifices made to them, even of young children who were

supposed specially acceptable to Wodin, and were hung on gibbets, or fastened to a post and drowned by the rising tide to propitiate the sea-goddess Ran. On one occasion Wulfram heard that a child was to be destroyed, and he hurried to the place, but found he was too late. However, when the boy had been hanging two hours the rope broke, and casting himself on the body, the Saint cried so earnestly to God, that the life was given back, and the child restored to his parents.

Another time, when two poor lads were waiting their doom on the wet sand, King Radbad sent for the Bishop, and said: "Go, save them if thou canst."

Then Wulfram made the sign of the Cross, and casting away his mantle, walked boldly into the sea, and taking the boys by the hand, came back to the shore, leading them, but not so much as the sole of his foot was wet. Then a great fear fell upon the people, so that many of them renounced their false gods, and even King Radbad was baptized a Christian.

After about twenty years' labour the health of Wulfram failed him, and he hastened back to Fontenelle, desiring to die in the seclusion of the cloister. Nine years after his death, his remains were translated to the Church of S. Peter, but in 1058 they were conveyed to Notre Dame at Abbeville, which, in course of time, took the name of the Church of S. Wulfram, and there the relics of the Saint are enclosed in a rich shrine.



S. Radegonde.

A.D. 587.

REARLY loved was this gentle French queen by those of her own time, and greatly venerated by those who have heard the story of her holy life. She was a princess of Thuringia, and, upon the death of her father, she was taken with her brother to the court of their uncle, who had been his murderer.

But the sin of Hermannfried in thus taking the life of his brother was punished by Theodoric, who sent his son to fight with him. Hermannfried had to take flight, and it was then that Radegonde and her little brother were

taken captives by the victorious army. The little girl was placed for education in the royal villa, on the river Somme, and there her childhood passed quietly away, and she learned to love to pray in the church, and was never more delighted than when she might help to dust and sweep it.

It seemed a terrible thing to Radegonde, when having grown up to girlhood, the wicked Clothaire sent for her that she might become his wife ; in her fear and sorrow she escaped by night in a boat, but was taken and given in marriage to the King. After six years of wedded life, during which she had borne many trials and sufferings, Radegonde heard that her husband had ordered the murder of her own brother, lest he might at some time claim the crown of Thuringia, and upon this the poor Queen fled from him, and appealed to S. Medard to release her from her hated union and consecrate her to God. He refused to do this, believing it opposed to the counsel of the Apostle ; however, she came into the sanc-

tuary dressed in habit and veil, and, approaching the altar, exclaimed : "If thou delayest to consecrate me, thou fearest man rather than God, and He will demand my soul at thy hands." S. Medard was almost startled by this sudden demand, and fearing lest indeed she might lose her soul should he refuse, he placed his hand upon her head and consecrated her a deaconess. Then Radegonde retired to Poitiers, but she heard that Clothaire was coming to take her by force, so she fled to the church of S. Hilary, and wrote a letter entreating him to leave her at liberty to follow her desire, and he agreed to her request, and even sent her money for the foundation of a convent, which she used in erecting the Abbey of S. Cross. The whole time of Radegonde was now spent in the service of the sick and poor, nor did she shrink from the most menial and repulsive offices, feeling that she was indeed ministering to Christ in the person of these afflicted ones. The Emperor Justin II. sent her a relic of the true Cross at her urgent request, and hearing

that the messengers were on the way, she hastened to entreat the Bishop of Poitiers to go forth with his clergy and transport the relic with due honour to her convent church.

Perhaps the Bishop doubted the authenticity of the relic, for he declined to do this, and the citizens refused permission for it to be brought within the walls.

This was terrible to Radegonde. The Cross whereon her Lord died not to be venerated, and prized as the most valuable of treasures ! In her sorrow she appealed so strongly and so touchingly to King Sigebert that he sent peremptory orders for her wishes to be obeyed, and the fragment of the Cross of Christ was carried with the utmost pomp to the convent church, the hymn *Vexilla regis* (now sung on Good Friday) being written for the occasion, and sung during the procession.

S. Radegonde died in the August of the year 587 ; in 1562 her body was burnt by the Calvinists, but some fragments were preserved.



S. Bathilde.

A.D. 670.

AN English maiden was carried in olden times to France as a slave, by Archimbold, who destined her to attend upon his wife. The young Bathilde was fair, and sweet to look on, prudent in speech, and modest of demeanour, so that she found great favour with Archimbold, and was appointed to be his cup-bearer.

Though thus raised above many of her fellow-servants, she behaved with much humility to them, ministering to the elder ones, and showing kindness to all, even cleaning their shoes and mending their clothing for them.

At length the wife of Archimbold died, and resolving on second marriage—he determined to choose this blue-eyed maiden, who was so kindly, and so well beloved by all who knew her.

Bathilde being informed of the honour destined for her, grew alarmed, and hiding among the lowest menials in the kitchen, she begrimed her face and put on rags, so completely disguising herself, that—believing she had gone away—Archimbold married some one in her stead. This was, indeed, good news to Bathilde, who came forth from the kitchen, and put on once more her own clothing, and smoothed her long fair hair.

Clovis was King over France at that time, and when he saw this lovely maiden serving Archimbold as cup-bearer, he declared that she and none other should be his wife, and Queen of France.

This time Bathilde could not escape, and at nineteen years old she was married to Clovis II.

Though exalted to so high a state she re-

mained as lowly of heart as if she were still but a serving-maiden ; it would seem that some measure of the sweet humility of the Blessed Mother of God had been given her, and she too had said, “ Behold the handmaid of the Lord ;” for she spent her life in conformity to God’s Holy Will, and recognising it as His hand which had raised her to share the throne, she strove to influence her husband for good, and to relieve and benefit all who needed assistance. Three sons were born to her ; but when the eldest was five years old Clovis died, and Bathilde was a widow and the Queen-regent.

Slavery was then established in France, and remembering her own hardships, Bathilde set herself to aid these oppressed ones. She discovered that a very heavy tax was levied on the people, to pay which mothers were forced to sell their children, and by cutting off this tax she also cut away the very root of slavery. She likewise spent all the money she could spare in redeeming these

poor slaves, and sent ambassadors to the different Courts of Europe to proclaim that the sale of French subjects was forbidden, and that any slave became free on French soil.

Another good work of this holy Queen was the founding of many religious houses, and towards the close of her life, when her son was of an age to govern his own kingdom, she retired to the monastery of Chelles, where she died in great peace at the age of fifty years.



S. Gudule.

A.D. 712.

ACOUNT named Witgern, and his wife Amalberga, lived in olden time in Brabant, where several children were born to them, one of whom they named Gudule.

Even before her birth it had been revealed to the mother that this infant should become in after life a model of sanctity; and in her earliest days she seemed to love God and desire to serve Him.

About two miles from the castle of her father there was a small village called Moorsel, where an oratory had been dedicated to

Our Lord. Every morning, at cock-crowing, Gudule made her way there, deterred by no severity of weather, disturbed by no fear. A servant-maid attended the child on these journeys, and once, when it was perfectly dark, the lantern she carried was suddenly extinguished. Their way led across a barren heath, and without a light it would be impossible to find the way ; but Gudule could not bear to return home and lose that time of quiet prayer and meditation ; so kneeling, she called God to her assistance, and the light was at once re-kindled, and thus she went on her way, rejoicing and giving thanks.

One frosty morning, at the early Mass, as the priest turned towards the people, his eye lighted on the feet of Gudule, which were visible from beneath her dress, and he observed that though her shoes were good they had no soles to them. He was troubled to think that this young girl should suffer from the cold stones of the pavement ; and after he had unvested, he took his own warm mittens

and placed them under her feet; but Gudule would not accept them, and seemed very much distressed to find that her act of mortification had been discovered.

As she quitted the church, she encountered a poor woman who carried upon her back her afflicted son, who was not only dumb, but a cripple. The young Countess was moved to a great compassion for the child and his mother, and stretching out her arms she held him to her breast, and prayed God to have pity on him. At her touch the crippled limbs became straight and strong, and speech being given in that moment, the boy cried: "See, I am made whole."

Gudule was abashed, and entreated the woman not to speak of what had happened; but she was full of wonder and gratitude, and published the news of the miracle to all her neighbours.

When the Saint died, crowds followed her to the tomb, for she had been greatly loved, and though her burial took place in the

January of the year 712, a poplar-tree, which was at the foot of her grave, burst into leaf upon the day after she had been laid there.

Afterwards this holy maiden's body was carried to the oratory at Moorsel, where she had prayed so often during her life; and Charlemagne founded a convent there. But troublous times came, the convent disappeared, and the remains of S. Gudule were taken by the robber baron who appropriated the lands of Moorsel; however they were afterwards recovered, and conveyed to Brussels, where a magnificent church is erected in her honour as patroness of the city. In art S. Gudule is represented carrying a lantern, which is being re-kindled by an attendant angel.



S. Guthlac.

A.D. 714.

GHERE was born to a noble man of Mercia, and his wife, a little son, who, when eight days old, received the Sacrament of Baptism, and was called by the name of Guthlac. As he grew older, he was ever an obedient, tractable child; clever too, and fond of hearing of brave deeds done by men in still earlier times. But a change came over Guthlac after he passed out of his innocent childhood, and, gathering together others of like tastes, he began to attack his enemies and ravage their farms, and do many an act of violence.

Thus passed some nine years, and then one night when weariness fell upon him, and he sat thinking over what had happened during the day, he seemed suddenly awakened to see the wretched end of sin, the miserable disappointment which follows human ambition, and he vowed that, if God would but spare him till the morrow, he would become His servant.

When day dawned, Guthlac signed himself with the sign of the Cross, and bade his old comrades farewell, telling them to find another captain, for he had resolved to fight only as a soldier of Christ; and, though they entreated him not to desert them, he kept firmly to his purpose and set off to the monastery of Repton, where in due time he received the tonsure. When the brethren found him determined to taste no fermented drink it made them angry; but his humility and sweetness of disposition overcame their dislike so that they began to love him sincerely. During the first two years of monastic life, Guthlac had learned

all the psalter and the hymns and canticles of the Church ; then, longing to live apart from men, he begged permission to depart. The most lonely place to be found was in the Lincolnshire fens, and there the holy Guthlac met with a man who spoke of some small island which no one had yet been brave enough to inhabit, so he was rowed in a boat to the spot called Crow or Croyland—so lonely a spot that none knew of it save he who was the guide.

Guthlac had left his brethren without bidding them farewell ; and now he returned to Repton for a time, and then started once more for the island with two servants.

Many fears and terrors assaulted Guthlac in his solitude, for strange figures rose up—the figures of some of the ancient Britons who had been driven there, as a hiding-place, from the Saxon invaders, and they tried to scare the hermit away ; but he overcame his dread, and made himself a little hermitage, eating barley bread and drinking only water. There the wild birds came to Guthlac and perched

upon his arms, or nestled in his bosom, as has been the case in many another Saint's life, for it seems as if God gives His inferior creatures the instinct to know and love those who are pure of heart.

Fifteen years had Guthlac dwelt on the island when, kneeling in prayer, he felt a sudden illness. One of his companions came to him asking what ailed him, and when Guthlac said it was the sign of approaching death, Beccel burst into tears.

"My son, be not grieved," said the holy man calmly. "To me it is no sorrow to go to the Lord my God." Four days later came the Easter Festival, and, though ill, Guthlac offered the Holy Sacrifice; but on the seventh day of his sickness it was plain that his end was very near. On the next night it seemed to Beccel that a great brightness was all about his master, who presently began to bid him farewell; then, strengthening himself with the Body and Blood of Christ, Guthlac raised his eyes to heaven and died.

Afterwards a church was built on the spot, and then there rose the great Abbey of Croyland, which became a refuge for all the oppressed ; and there a community of holy monks offered prayer and praise to Almighty God, and were beloved by all the people of the fens for their ardent charity.



S. Stephen the Younger, M.

A.D. 764.

HE parents of this Saint had dedicated him to God even before his birth, resolving that if another son was given them he should be trained to become a monk. Thus, when in the year 714 Stephen came into the world, his mother knew that he was only given to her for a little while, and that when arrived at a fitting age she should be permitted to yield him up wholly to the service of the Almighty. Having been educated within the walls of a monastery in his own native city of Constantinople, Stephen, at sixteen years old, became a religious at S.

Auxentius, near Chalcedon, a monastery where the brethren lived like hermits in little cells. At the age of thirty, Stephen became Abbot; but in about twelve years he relinquished his office, and built himself so small a cell that he could neither lie at length nor stand upright in it.

In the year 754 a council was held against the veneration of images, at the instance of Constantine Copronymus, during his iconoclastic persecution; and as he wished to force S. Stephen to give in to the decrees of the council, a body of soldiers was sent to bring him from his cell. But only by force was he removed, for he refused to go willingly; and having been conveyed to the foot of Mount S. Auxentius, he was there placed under a guard.

The Emperor, wishing to entrap him and thus find legitimate reason for putting him to death, persuaded one of his courtiers to ask to be received as a novice—a power which had been expressly forbidden by Constantine to all monasteries.

The young courtier, George Syncletus, approached the Saint accordingly, and on his knees asked the habit; but Stephen reminded him of the Emperor's prohibition. However, George entreated him all the more, saying that both his temporal and eternal welfare depended on it, and thus gained his point, and, receiving the religious garb, ran with it to the Emperor, who next day presented him in the amphitheatre dressed in it. Then, inflamed with anger, Constantine tore the habit off his back, and the people trampled it beneath their feet, while armed men were sent to disperse the monks and burn down the church and monastery. This done, they dragged S. Stephen from his cell, and, bearing him off to the shore, struck him violently with clubs and otherwise illtreated him, and then, putting him in a small boat, had him conveyed to a monastery not far from Constantinople, where several of the leading iconoclasts came to visit him. After many attempts to persuade S. Stephen to yield, he was sentenced to be

banished to the island of Proconnesas, where many of his monks joined him. For two years he dwelt there, the fame of his sanctity increasing ; but his persecutors ordered him thence to a prison in Constantinople, where he was loaded with irons.

A few days later, being brought up before the Emperor, he was asked whether he believed that men trampled on Christ by trampling on His image. "God forbid," was the Saint's reply ; and, taking a coin from his pocket, he asked what treatment would be his were he to stamp insultingly on the image of the Emperor. His question was quickly answered, and then he added, "Is it then so great a crime to outrage the representation of an earthly emperor, and none to cast into the fire the image of the King of Heaven ?"

The Emperor's reply was to order him off to execution ; but as the martyr was led away, the order was countermanded, and he was taken back to prison and cruelly scourged. When Stephen was left half dead upon the dun-

geon-floor, the Emperor cried out, "Will no one rid me of this monk?" Then some soldiers rushed in, and, seizing his bruised and bleeding form, dragged him roughly through the streets, while the people beat him with sticks, or pelted him with stones. At length his brains were dashed out with a club, and the furious mob, seizing his body, tore it to pieces. No honourable resting-place or shrine had this Saint and martyr of early days, but his name and story have been preserved through long centuries, as of one who, being faithful to the inspirations of the Holy Spirit in early life, received strength to be faithful in a martyr's temptation and to die a martyr's death.



S. Lambert.

A.D. 708.

LAESTRICHT was the birthplace of Lambert, and there his parents were universally esteemed, not only because they were rich and noble, but because they were descended from Christian ancestors.

During Lambert's infancy his father took care that he should be guarded from the sight or knowledge of evil, and had him carefully instructed in spiritual things. As he grew older he was placed under the charge of S. Theodard, who felt great affection for his pupil, and strove to train him to the practice of Christian perfection. When Theodard re-

signed his bishopric in 669, Lambert was named as his successor by King Childeric; and his appointment gave universal satisfaction, for he was deemed most suitable for it by reason of his wisdom, learning, and sanctity of life. To Lambert himself the episcopal charge was a heavy burden, although one which God laid upon him, and he gave himself to more earnest prayer so that he might never act from human respect, but solely for the Divine glory, and that he might be daily enlightened by the Holy Spirit in the discharge of his duties. But when a revolution came, and Childeric was slain, S. Lambert was expelled from his see and for seven years resided in the monastery of Stavelo, following the rule as strictly as the youngest novice there. One night, as he was rising to go to his own private prayers, he dropped his wooden sandal, which fell somewhat noisily upon the ground. The Abbot heard it, and, deeming it a breach of the silence required by the rule, ordered the brother who had made

this noise to go and pray before the Cross, but he did not know it was S. Lambert.

The Cross stood in the open air ; and there the Saint repaired, barefooted as he was and clad only in his hair-shirt, and thus he continued kneeling for some four hours.

After Matins, when the monks were assembled together, the Abbot asked if all were there, and they answered him yes—save one who had been sent to pray before the Cross.

The Abbot commanded that the absent monk should be called at once ; but when he perceived it was the holy Bishop Lambert, he fell on the ground and entreated his pardon.

The Bishop raised him, saying, “God forgive you for thinking you need pardon for this action. Is it not in cold and nakedness that, according to the Holy Apostle Paul, I am to tame my flesh and serve God ?”

When at length Lambert was recalled to his people, he came forth from his retirement with renewed zeal in the Divine service, and set himself to the task of preaching with

much earnestness. He often visited S. Willibrord, the Apostle of Friesland, conferring with him upon the best means of converting men to the faith of Christ.

S. Lambert had always great courage in reprobating those who lived in open sin; and thus it was that some hated him, and even conspired against his life.

There were two young men, brothers, who plundered the church of Maestricht, thus incensing some of S. Lambert's relatives to so great an anger that they slew the offenders. Dodo, their near kinsman, determined to avenge himself upon the Bishop, although he had no part whatever in the matter, and, bringing a band of armed men, broke into his house when he was quietly sleeping. Roused by the noise, Lambert awoke, but he would not suffer his domestics to defend him. "If you truly love me," he said, "love Jesus Christ and confess your sins unto Him. As for me, it is time that I go to live with Him." Then, prostrate on the ground, with his arms

extended in the form of a Cross, he began to pray ; but one of the followers of Dodo threw a dart at the Saint, and thus ended his life.

This happened on the 17th Sept., 708, when S. Lambert had ruled as Bishop for forty years. His body was conveyed to Maestricht and there interred in S. Peter's Church; but so many miracles were worked at his tomb that it was resolved to erect a church upon the very spot where he had been slain, and there his relics were translated in the year 721.



S. Emilian.

A.D. 767.

EHIS Saint was not born to wealth or honour—he was but the son of humble parents, whose home was one of the small cottages in a village of Brittany. Though himself poor, and knowing what it was to suffer hunger, Emilian was always ready to give his crust of bread or scanty meal to any one whose need was greater than his own, for he knew that he was really ministering to Christ in the person of His suffering ones. As he grew to boyhood, Emilian was placed in service in the house of a nobleman. There he used to

save his own food to give to the beggars who came to the door, or the poor in their own homes, whose wants he knew so well. One day he was detected in carrying away bread which he had saved from his own meal, and wrapped up in some article of clothing. When his master asked him what he had there, he said it was but chips of wood; and thus it was found to be when the cloak was drawn aside, for God had worked a miracle rather than that His servant should be blamed for charity given for His sake. After a time Emilian left service and went to a monastery in the Saintonges where he had the office of cellarer and baker. It has sometimes been God's Will, for the greater perfection of His saints, that their virtues should be a source of envy to their brethren, and so was it in the case of Emilian. Seeing him more humble, more charitable, more patient than themselves, there were some in the monastery who conceived a violent dislike to him, and one day when he was baking they removed all the im-

plements necessary for the oven on purpose to give him trouble.

But nowise angry nor even dispirited, Emilian got into the oven himself to remove the loaves, nor was he injured by the heat.

Feeling drawn to a life of solitude, the Saint did not long remain in the monastery. Wandering southward, he came at length to the banks of the Dordogne, and entered a gloomy forest which seemed to offer the complete seclusion from men his soul desired. Finding a cave there, he made it his dwelling ; no other seat had he but a rough stone, and a slab of the rock was his only resting-place during the short time of sleep which he permitted himself. There, then, dwelt Emilian in holy prayer and contemplation ; but his sanctity was a light which could not wholly be concealed, and in time many people were attracted to visit him and crave spiritual guidance or comfort in their perplexities.

In the year 797 God called Emilian to himself ; but the cave wherein he dwelt still re-

mains, and many pilgrims journey there to see the place which was his bed, and the stone which served him for a table, beneath which is a lower one, where he used to sit.

A pretty chapel stands now above the cave, which was built in the thirteenth century, and, though fallen into disuse, is still a good specimen of early French architecture.



S. Werburga, B. Abbess.

8TH CENTURY.

WULFHERE, King of Mercia, and his holy wife Ermigilda, had four children born to them, but of these four, Werburga was far the most ready to receive the lessons of Christian truth, which her mother strove to impart from her earliest years, and her mind seemed full of pure thoughts and desires.

The ordinary pleasures of life which have so great a charm to the young, seemed worthless in the estimation of Werburga, whose heart was wholly given to God, and who sought to purify her soul by fasting and by prayer.

Each day found her reciting the Offices of the Church in company with her mother, and much time was given to other devotions.

But though fully resolved to be the spouse of Christ, Werburga had to resist the proposals made to her by those who were attracted by her beauty and rank. Among others, there was a knight named Werbode, who became strongly attached to this fair girl, and being powerful in her father's court, he resolved to win her. Believing that Werburga's brothers, then under the instruction of S. Chad, were supporting her in her refusal of his offer, he planned to murder them, and so remove all obstacles in the way of gaining his desire. In this dreadful scheme he was partly aided by Werburga's father, whom he succeeded in turning against his own sons, but soon afterwards Werbode died a terrible death, and then the king was seized with remorse and fear because of his sins, and he began to convert the Pagan temples into Christian churches.

Afterwards he built the Priory of Stone in

Staffordshire, and the great Abbey of Peterborough.

When Werburga saw her father so changed she begged him to let her consecrate herself to God, and moved by her earnestness he at length consented, and himself conducted her to the convent of Ely. The whole court were in attendance, and were met at the convent gate by a procession of nuns, singing hymns of thanksgiving. S. Etheldreda was then Abbess, and falling at her feet, Werburga begged of her the favour of being received as a postulant.

Having obtained her request, the nuns chanted the *Te Deum*, and then passing within the door, Werburga laid aside her coronet and silken robes for the coarse, rough habit which marked her as one who desired to be the bride of Christ.

Werburga's previous life had well prepared her for the many necessary trials of the novitiate, and she became daily more conformed to the likeness of her Divine Spouse.

After many years King Ethelred desired that Werburga should be made superintendent of all the religious houses for women in his kingdom, and in this difficult and arduous position she laboured diligently, and with marked success.

Through the liberal assistance of Ethelred, she was able to found convents at Weedon in Northamptonshire, at Trentham in Gloucestershire, and also at Hanbury in Staffordshire, in all of which houses the religious spirit was well maintained.

But while zealous in her care for the souls of others, Werburga did not deem herself one who had already attained perfection, but prayed and laboured continually for the salvation of her soul. She took but one meal a day, and that of the coarsest food, and often she would remain whole nights in the church, weeping and lamenting over what in her great humility she deemed her many sins, and yet old chronicles tell that she was a model of charity, meekness, patience, and all Christian virtues.

Thus passed many long years ; Werburga grew old, and at length felt symptoms of approaching death, which caused her to make a last visit to all the houses under her rule, enjoining upon her spiritual daughters so to live that they might be found ready for the Bridegroom when He came. Then, in the convent of Trentham she quietly waited for God's summons, and died on the 3rd February, 699.

It was Werburga's desire that her body should be taken to Hanbury for interment, and there it remained until 708, when King Coelred had it translated to a more costly shrine. Old histories tell that at the time of the Danish invasion the shrine was removed to Chester for safety, and in course of time a church was then erected over the relics, which became a cathedral, as now in our own day. During the reign of Henry VIII. the shrine, like so many others, was desecrated, and the relics of S. Werburga scattered abroad ; what remained of the shrine was afterwards converted into a throne, which is still used as the throne of the Bishops of Chester.



S. Rigobert.

A.D. 749.



MONK of the holy Order of S. Benedict named Rigobert was raised to the Archbishopric of Rheims in the year 696. He began to labour with all diligence to fulfil the duties of his state, and succeeded in restoring religious discipline and holiness of living within his diocese.

His dwelling was over the city gate, and his chambers had a window looking towards the Basilica of S. Remigius, at which he often used to pray. He had a small hole knocked in the turret of S. Peter's church, which stood within the gateway, and thus by a ladder he could descend into the church to pray long be-

fore the Blessed Sacrament, and returned by it to a small oratory built upon the wall, and dedicated to S. Michael.

When Charles Martel was fighting with Ragenfried, he came at the head of his troops to Rheims, and demanded that the gates should be thrown open to him.

The holy Rigobert was the keeper of the keys, and coming to the gate, he declined obeying the command. "How can I do so," he said, "when I do not know which of the two will have the kingdom?"

In a furious passion Charles Martel turned away, vowing that the Archbishop should bitterly repent that refusal, and when having conquered Ragenfried, he came again to Rheims, he remembered his threat, and drove S. Rigobert into exile. Nor was he content with doing this; he also took the ecclesiastical revenues and made them over to those laymen who were his court favourites.

During his exile, Rigobert dwelt in Gascony, but when Pepin recalled him, he came to Rheims. There he found another had been

appointed to the See, so he went quietly away to a village not far off called Gerincour, where he lived in great poverty, giving himself wholly to prayer. From time to time he visited Rheims for the purpose of offering the Holy Sacrifice on the Altar of the Blessed Virgin, which had been given over to his special use. One day he visited the church of S. Cyriac at Cormicy to pray very specially for his poor diocese, which was lapsing into much carelessness ; and afterwards conversing with Wibert, the comptroller of Rheims, was asked by him to dinner.

But S. Rigobert said he could not come, as he had yet to offer Mass in the church at Gerincour.

As he spoke, a poor widow approached, bringing a goose as an offering to Wibert. "Here, take this goose home and cook it for your dinner if you cannot dine with me," said Wibert, turning to the Saint, and Rigobert accepted the gift and gave it to his little server to carry, while he followed behind, saying his Office.

But the goose was strong, and escaping from the child's hands, flew away, whereupon the little fellow began to cry, but Rigobert hastened to comfort him, saying it mattered not, and he bade him try to learn that it is wrong to weep for the loss of earthly goods.

Having consoled the boy, the good Bishop resumed his interrupted Office, now and again repeating aloud some verse or breaking into a chant, and soon the goose came fluttering back, and the little server picking it up, carried it safely to Gerincour.

But Rigobert would not have it killed, and in a short time it became so tame that it would follow him as far as Rheims, and, waiting till his Mass was over, accompany him home again. It is for this reason that S. Rigobert is represented in art with a goose by his side.

The relics of the Saint are preserved in the cathedral of Notre Dame, in the church of S. Denis at Rheims, and in the chapel of S. Rigobert.



S. Xenophon.

5TH CENTURY.

XHERE was a senator in the court of Constantine, at Byzantium, who had two sons, whom he regarded with deep affection. When they had progressed in their study of Greek sufficiently, Xenophon sent them by ship to Berytus, to be there instructed in law. He was dangerously ill when the day of their departure came, and bade them farewell, little hoping to see them again in this world. They had not been gone many days when a violent storm reduced the vessel to a wreck, and the brothers were tossed on the angry waves, though they afterwards

reached land in safety by clinging to some broken spars.

But being brought to shore at some distance from each other, neither brother was aware of the safety of his companion. John found a monastery, wherein he was hospitably entertained, while Arcadius made his way to Jerusalem, being grievously dismayed by the loss of all the money with which his father had entrusted him. Still more did he lament the loss of his brother, from whom he had never before been separated, and in poverty and loneliness he knew not what would befall him.

At length he came to a monastery ruled by an aged Abbot, who sought to comfort the lonely wanderer, and urged him to seek rest in God. Then Arcadius remembered his happy days of childhood, and how often his pious father Xenophon had spoken of the peace to be found in a cloister, and he therefore begged to receive the habit and abide there. John had already resolved to become a monk

in the house where he had been so kindly received, finding there a happiness he had never known before.

Meanwhile the father had recovered from his illness, and talked often with his wife about their absent sons, wondering much that there was no tidings of them. At length he sent a servant to Berytus, to make inquiry, and thus to the poor mother came the tidings that the vessel had been wrecked, and it was feared that all on board had perished. But this pious woman had long striven to love the holy Will of God in all things, and now by Divine grace she was enabled to say, "The Lord gave and the Lord hath taken away, blessed be the Name of the Lord."

Xenophon was not in his house when the news was brought from Berytus, but in the evening he came and found the supper spread and his wife waiting for him. As he began his meal he saw that her eyes were tearful, and questioning her, she began to weep, and at length told him all.

Then Xenophon also received this affliction as from God, saying, "The Lord's Name be praised;" yet both parents grieved because they had no certainty whether their children were alive or dead. At length they resolved to find out something concerning them, and for this purpose started to Palestine, and reaching Jerusalem visited the holy places, praying much to hear of their lost sons. One day they saw a man wearing the habit of a monk, whom they recognised as a former servant of their children, and he told them that nearly all on board the ill-fated ship had perished, but he had escaped and embraced the life of a religious.

It was three years since John and Arcadius had left their home when their parents visited the monastery where Arcadius had been received, and having heard their story the old Abbot bade them hope, and appointed to meet them upon Mount Calvary on a certain day.

At that very time John was in Jerusalem on pilgrimage, and the Abbot having heard

something of his story, sent for him, and found him to be the brother of his own monk Arcadius. There was a joyful meeting between the two, and then together they accompanied the Abbot to the place where he had desired Xenophon and Mary to await him.

“Rejoice, for your sons are found!” he cried. “Go, and prepare a feast, to which I with these two monks will come, and when we have eaten I will bring your sons to your arms.”

So the feast was prepared, but the two young monks could hardly control their emotion at the sight of their dear parents, so aged with care and grief. During the meal Xenophon began to speak of the peaceful life which those enjoyed who had left the world for the seclusion of the cloister.

“Glad should I be,” he added, “if my dear sons were in such green pastures.”

“Well, suppose one of these monks tell us why he entered the religious life,” said the Abbot; and Arcadius began, but the first few

words betrayed the secret, and father and mother knew that their children were with them once more.

And now S. Xenophon felt that he had no desire unfulfilled, neither was there any further tie to the world, so he also and his wife lived a solitary life, praying to God and praising Him for all His goodness, united in heart though separated in body.



S. Meinrad.

A.D. 863.

MERTHOLD, of Sülchen, on the Neckar, had married a count's daughter, and to them was born, in the year 797, a son whom they called by the name of Meinrad. At the age of ten or eleven years the boy was sent for education to a Benedictine Monastery of great reputation which stood on the island of Reichenau. It had two distinct schools, one for the training of those who were to enter the monastic state, the other for the sons of nobles destined to live in the world.

It was from the monks that the Germans learned to be an agricultural people; for seeing

them busy labouring with their own hands, tending cattle and tilling land, in time they began to follow the example set them. Meinrad was in the monastery school at the time that the Church of Our Lady was built at Reichenau, and at the ceremony of consecration he was one of the four hundred scholars who, with seven hundred monks and a hundred novices, assisted in singing the psalms and *cœlestis urbs*.

In the year 821 Meinrad was ordained deacon, and afterwards priest, and his next step was to become a monk in the Abbey of Reichenau, when he was twenty-five years of age.

There was a small community established near the Lake of Zürich, consisting of a prior and twelve brethren, who had set up a school for boys, and, being in want of a master, they sent to Reichenau for one, and Meinrad was chosen by the prior for the office. He filled his new position with admirable discretion; but his yearning was for some greater solitude, and as he gazed at Mount Etzel, which rose

beyond the lake some two miles off, his heart longed to find some rocky cell there in which to pass his days.

At length he paid it a visit, and descending the hill, reached the village of Altendorf, where a pious widow gave him rest and refreshment in her little dwelling, and Meinrad asked her if she would minister to his necessities if he carried out his design of dwelling among the mountain peaks of Etzel.

She readily promised to do so, and Meinrad returned with joy to beg permission from his prior, who, believing it was the voice of God calling the monk into solitude, blessed him and bade him go.

Meinrad was then thirty-one years of age ; he took with him only his Missal, the Rule of S. Benedict, and the Works of Cassian, and with these volumes climbed the steep ascent. Looking down he saw the beautiful lake before him, but behind was the forest gloom, and above, the Alpine peaks rose in solitary grandeur.

Collecting broken boughs, he interlaced them between four pines, and roofed this hovel in with ferns, but later the widow of Altendorf built him a hut of pine logs, and a little chapel. A lonely and silent dwelling ! No sound but the howl of a wolf, or the cry of some wild cat, or the wind whispering in the tops of the pine trees ; but there Meinrad passed his days and nights in prayer and austerity, keeping his soul closely united to God.

Thus passed seven years, and people began to flock to the hermit's cell for instruction or help ; his former scholars also came to visit him, and once, after going with them down the mountain and across the river at its base, he came to a still greater solitude, and resolved to remove there. First, he visited Altendorf, and bade farewell to the widow who had shown him so much kindness, and then, with one of the young monks from Bollingen, and a peasant carrying what was necessary to be conveyed to this wilderness, he went on his way.

As they descended the mountain path the young brother saw a nest of ravens, and climbing the tree, brought down two young birds to be the companion of Meinrad's solitude. The abbess of a small community of women at Zürich undertook to minister to his wants, sending him food from time to time.

Now began a life of most complete solitude, and we hear that as the snow drifted in upon him and the icy blasts pierced him through, the holy Meinrad often felt the temptation come upon him to return to Bollingen or Reichenau; but knowing it was from the evil one, he bravely resisted it, and only redoubled his prayer and fasting. Several years passed away before his retreat was found out, but at length pilgrims began to flock to his cell, drawn there partly to converse with Meinrad, and partly for the purpose of praying before a miraculous statue of the Virgin Mother and Child, which had been presented to him.

Twenty-five years did the hermit pass in

this solitude, with no companions save his two ravens, who perched upon a pine-branch above the door of his hut. During the last years of his life many offerings were laid at his door by pilgrims, and many before the image of Mary ; and thus two men conceived the idea that he was accumulating treasure, and they planned to rob him. But Meinrad gave to the poor all that was not needed for the adornment of his little chapel, and had no store of money as these robbers believed. They met in a tavern at Endigen to arrange how to carry out their wicked scheme, and next morning before day-dawn, started for the hermit's cell. But the paths of the forest were covered with snow, and long they wandered ere they found Meinrad's retreat.

As they approached, the ravens screamed and fluttered round their heads as if they had instinct to know their murderous designs, but though somewhat startled, the men went to the chapel door, and through a crack watched him conclude the Holy Sacrifice and turn from the altar, before they knocked.

With a calm face Meinrad admitted them. "My friends, I would that you had arrived a little earlier," he said; "you might then have been present at Holy Mass; but enter and pray for God's blessing while I prepare such refreshment as my poor cell affords." He turned to quit the chapel, but the murderers rushed after him, and with a smile he told them that he knew their intention, and he begged them when he was dead to place a taper at his head and another at his feet, and escape as quickly as possible.

To one he gave his tunic, to the other his cloak, yet, unmoved by his gentleness, they beat him about the head with sticks until he fell lifeless at their feet, when they threw his body on the dried leaves which had been his only couch, and put a mat over him. Then they began their search for money, but none could they find, so they prepared to depart; but remembering the request of the murdered Saint, they put a taper at his head, and turned to the sanctuary lamp to light the second,

when in dismay they saw the first candle already burning. They flew from the spot, pursued by the ravens, who attacked them with their beaks and claws, and ran towards Wollerau; there they met a man who recognised the hermit's birds, and hurried to the cell, where he found Meinrad dead. Hastening back to Wollerau he spread the news, and the assassins were found hiding within a house at the windows of which the ravens still fluttered, uttering shrill screams. They were at once secured, and confessed all they had done.

The relics of the holy Meinrad are preserved at Einseideln, which became a noted place of pilgrimage.

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